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Welcome

Sunday evenings won't be the same for me now. Why? For the last five weeks at 8pm I've sat and watched BBC Two's reality fishing programme, Earth's Wildest Waters – The Big Fish.

It's been the first 'angling' programme on terrestrial TV for quite a while and I, my young sons and friends (both anglers and non-anglers) have pretty much enjoyed it. Previously my TV fishing fix came from Sky's Tight Lines and the countless repeats of the great River Monsters with Jeremy Wade, and not so great Extreme Fishing with Robson Green, which my two sons put me through on the numerous different channels on Sky.

What The Big Fish brought was a fishing programme on at a prime time, which I hope has inspired a few non-anglers and lapsed anglers to venture out and give fishing a go.

Ben Fogle and Matt Hayes did a great job presenting the show and the eight contestants showed us what fishing has to offer. The programme featured quite a bit of fly fishing, which was also great to see. It also put across the social and environmental aspects of our sport as it captured the excitement of catching fish, the beautiful venues it takes us to and the friendship and camaraderie it brings. So I

hope there will be a second series, perhaps a UK-based one to show the exceptional fishing we have here, using venues that we can all access. Who knows, it might even make its way onto BBC One!

Angling should be on terrestrial TV so fingers crossed that the series runs again and hopefully we might also see more angling programmes on the same lines as the A Passion For Angling series.

As Christmas approaches (despite this being the January issue I'm writing this in mid-November and you're probably reading it in early December) you might want to receive an annual subscription to TFF instead of the usual socks and chocolates! Check out our great subscription offers on pages 59 and 74 and get your favourite magazine delivered to your door.

For those of you who struggle to find a copy you can now log on to <http://seymour.magzene.com/> to find your nearest stockist. I've just used it and now know there are five places to buy TFF in Stafford, not just one as I had previously thought!



Wishing you all a very merry Christmas and the tightest of lines for 2016.

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Contents



06 The Learning Curve Part 4: Casting For Success

COVER STORY Sky Sports' Andy Ford takes two trips to Northamptonshire's Elinor Trout Fishery, with results at either end of the fish-catching spectrum...



42 Convertible Buzzers

COVER STORY David Heseltine converts his top buzzer patterns into stunning nymphs and takes them to Staffordshire's Loynton Trout Fishery to see if the resident fish like them too.

12 The Light Touch

Ben Bangham shares his approach to fishing light for grayling in the low, clear water of the beautiful River Test.

48 The Horseshoe Approach

COVER STORY Greys Pro-Team member and angling guide Martin Stewart outlines his sectional approach to covering a river, which has seen him catch huge winter grayling.

26 The Hills Are Alive

Tom 'Doc' Sullivan takes a summer trip to Ireland's Ceimín hill loughs, where the butter-gold browns are as beautiful as the scenery.



REGULARS



18 News

The Essential Fly offers a discount for all TFF readers and a new team to tackle fish crime.

22 Flies For All Seasons

Steve Cullen ties the Cracker Jack, a deadly variant of the Jack Frost lure.

*** New Series ***

25 Flies Of The Year

Scotland international angler Kevin Porteous reveals his top patterns of 2015.

32 Casting Back

We take a trip to the TFF archives to see what was going on in January 2006 and 2011.

35 Pimped-Up Patterns

Kieron Jenkins brings you the Christmas Tree Snake, Cat Apps and Caddis Jig. Enjoy!

38 Ask The Panel

Our panel of experts answer your fly fishing queries.

*** New Series ***

47 Flies Of The Year

Welsh international angler David Hoppe shares his top patterns of 2015.

60 Snowbee Challenge

The entries have come in thick and fast this month: there's a 20lb rainbow, plus a beautiful tiger trout for one lucky young angler.

62 PostBag

A happy Essential Fly winner and an alternative use for those Christmas decorations...

*** New Series ***

72 The Big Tie Off

It's here at last, our new fly-tying competition sponsored by Turrall. This is your chance to show off your fly-tying skills and win some great prizes.

75 Total Tackle

Snowbee's Geo river fly rod, Wychwood's new Connect Series fly lines and a smart concertina fly box from Veniard are just some of the items reviewed.

79 Competition

WIN! It's your chance to win one of three Daiwa Lexa rods, worth over £700 in total.

86 20 Questions

Kieron Jenkins, our man behind the Pimped-Up Patterns vice, is next in the hot seat.

*** New Series ***

88 Tying Tips

Matchman Flies' Carl Nixon shares his top tying tips. This month he looks at booby eyes and buzzer cheeks.

98 One Last Cast

Jem Packer gives us his guide to ensuring you get the fly fishing present you always wanted this Christmas.



55 On The Bank

In the second part of this new series, England international Simon Robinson guides us around his local Chatton Trout Fishery, sharing his hotspots, tactics and flies for this premier Northumberland stillwater.

65 Hunting From The Banks

Wychwood's Steve Cullen braves the elements on an end-of-season foray at Draycote Water, in search of one of those special fish.



80 Pike On The Tube

Destination angler Laurent Guillermin targets stillwater pike from the comfort of his float tube.

90 Archie's Antiques Roadshow

Clark Colman takes a trip down memory lane, when he uses tackle from the 20th century to try and tame the lady of the stream. Will he succeed?



Part 4

The Learning Curve

Casting For Success

Sky Sports' Andy Ford heads to Elinor Trout Fishery, where hours of casting practice down at the local cricket pitch make all the difference...



Casting practice pays off as the fish on the downwind bank are now in reach.

My fly fishing journey has progressed quickly since starting on those small waters close to home eight years ago. As a 40-something with a coarse fishing background, I've found the process compelling as I've moved to try rivers and fishing from boats.

The real test came with what can only be described as a big step up to fish big waters from the bank. It was to uncover the biggest flaws in my technique, leaving me feeling humbled and exposed. I suppose my very first attempt at this type of fishing set things in motion.

Haunted By The Barr Brothers

Since it all began I seem to have been haunted by Craig and Iain Barr; England's turbo-charged fly fishing twins loom large in my fluff-chucking education.

Arriving at Pitsford Reservoir with a camera crew in tow, I was tasked to make a film with Craig about catching early season fry feeders from the bank. As ever, he was the consummate professional, explaining setup, flies and tactics before heading to the water.



Fishery manager Ed Foster gives advice on flies and tactics, an important starting point on any fishery.

Craig made it look so easy. The casting was effortless. Within half a dozen immaculate deliveries an obliging fish was on the bank. More followed, as expected.

"Do you want a go?" he said, as the camera was packed up. It was an easy answer but the second I took the rod in my hand I realised that I was in trouble. Just getting the flies out there was ridiculously hard. I'd watched Craig's casting with interest; it was effortless. There was never any suggestion of a tangle. He just fished.

For me to 'just fish' seemed impossible. Occasionally I got it right, but more by a happy accident. I had no feel for this new skill. It was about as far removed from casting a 7ft 4-wt 20 yards on a small

water, or flipping a team of nymphs over my rod tip on a chalkstream, as you could possibly get. Embarrassed, I said: "Errr, thank you," and handed the rod back. It only took him 10 minutes to untangle his leader from the tree behind us and unknot the cast!

Several more films followed as my exposure to big waters and bank fishing increased. Iain Barr explaining a fly angler's top five ways to improve at Elinor was next.

"Do you want a chuck?" he said. It was Groundhog Day!

Concentrate On Casting

I didn't seem able to keep the cast up. When I did, the dreaded tailing loop – where your flies drop under the main line then catch it on

the forward cast – took over. I might get three average casts away but the fourth found me sobbing into a tangled heap of disappointment and fluorocarbon.

With occasional trips out to these bigger venues, though, my casting was slowly improving.

One reason my fly fishing education didn't start until I was 39 was my obsession with another sport – cricket.

I played the game for 25 years, spending entire weekends in the Southern Premier League. My bat and pads are now in the attic, but it's ironic that the 22 emerald yards where I wheeled away, bowling thousands of overs, helped me find my salvation in fly fishing.

Close to my home is a cricket pitch, and it's where I now practise my casting. It's three miles from the nearest piece of water, or any rising trout. Here I can concentrate on casting, and not fishing.

If you've not tried it, I'd recommend it, even though people think you are mad! However, when trying to catch fish, or even the presentation of flies, is completely removed from the casting process, clarity of mind returns.

I wander around the pitch,



High pressure and warm water are not the ideal stillwater conditions...



... and after two laps of the lake and several fly changes there are still no signs of a fish.

making casts at various targets as bewildered parents push their children on the swings nearby. “Have you caught anything mister?” is the mocking cry from a couple of wandering teenagers. “No. Not yet,” is my reply.

Time For Elinor

So, at least I could cast now, even if the method wasn't pretty. It was time for Elinor.

It was a stunning September day when I arrived to be greeted by fishery manager Ed Foster. I'd filmed here three times now and was aching for the chance to have a proper go myself. I loved the look of the place. My most recent visit was to film the Iain Barr Bank Masters Final, where I saw the Appleby family show their class and some incredible displays of distance casting.

Having Iain's number in my phone is handy for days like this. As I've always said, I'm never bothered by asking people stupid questions.

“What's working then, champ,” I said to the former world champion.

“I'll send you a few flies,” he said.

So, I was equipped and ready for the fight. There was a small issue at the back of my mind, though.

The day before arriving, I'd discovered another of my pals, England international Scott Nellins, was making a

The return visit. Will Archie the springer spaniel change Andy's fortunes?



film at Elinor. I contacted him for advice and his reply was a worry.

“It's rock hard. The fish don't want to eat. There are a couple of areas with pods of fish in them but they won't feed.”

Scott, one of the most gifted young anglers in the country, had spent an entire day thrashing the water to a foam and only managed two fish. If he'd struggled, what chance did I have?

So followed a day of frustration. However, as I've discovered along my journey, in fly fishing, every day is a school day. After chatting to Ed, it was clear that

the fish were having a bit of a sulk. High pressure, warm water, bright sunshine and an easterly wind over the top were what faced me.

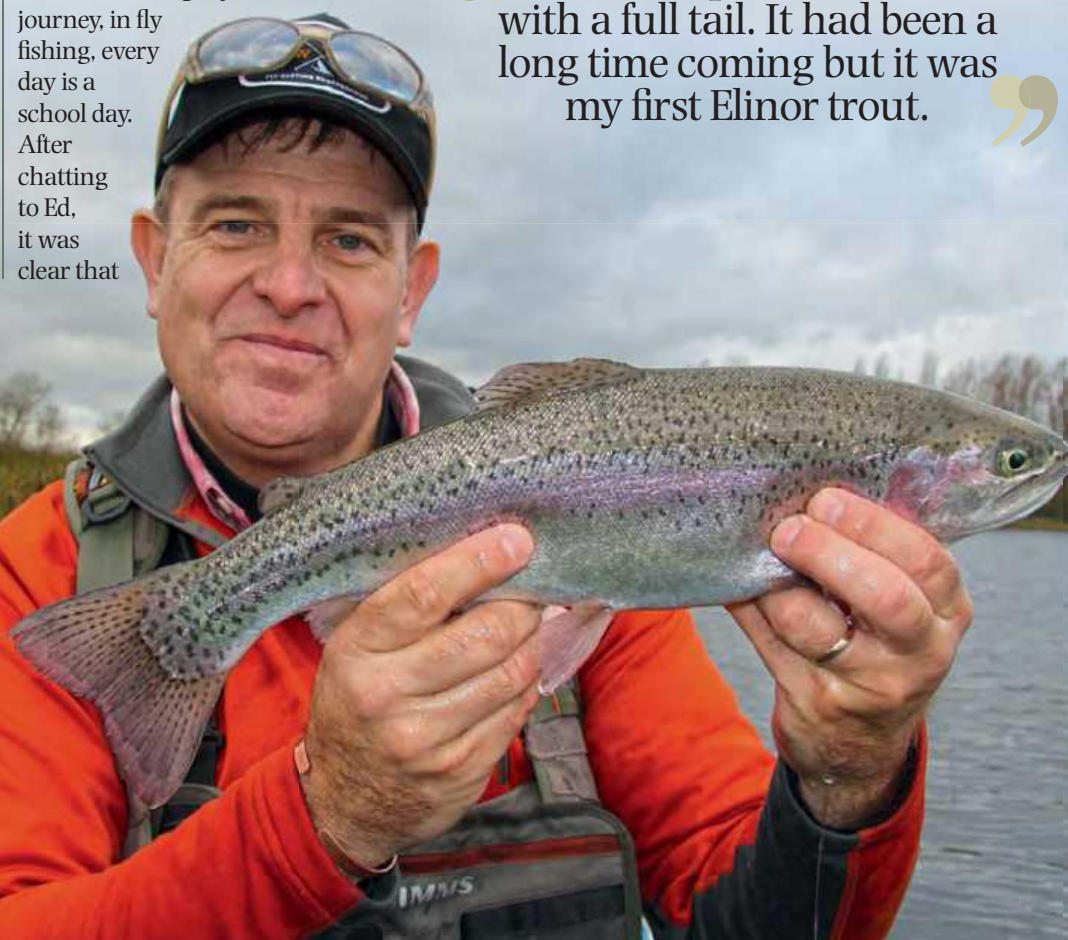
I started the session near the boat pontoon below the lodge. Four swims were covered as my washing line – a team of three flies, supported by a buoyant 'Blob' on the point and two Iain Barr red Crunchers tied on droppers above – went to work.

There was not a sign.

Changing the point fly makes the difference...



“It was a superb, silver fish with a full tail. It had been a long time coming but it was my first Elinor trout.”





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... as the FAB keeps the team of flies high in the shallow water...



... while the weighted Blue-Flash Damsel finds the pressured fish that have moved deeper.



Several boats fishing in front of me were drifting aimlessly around, also not catching. There were a few anglers bank fishing too. All had similar tales of woe. It was one of those days that we all dread – when you try everything and nothing seems to work. Two full laps of Elinor's expansive shoreline later and I'd blanked. A hand on the shoulder from Ed showed it wasn't just me. Ten others had fished from the bank and had come away empty-handed. One angler had landed two fish from a boat. I drove off, licking my wounds, vowing to return when the water temperature had dropped.

The Return

Two months later, and as I pulled through the gates it was clear that Elinor had switched on. Days before, Iain Barr had been practising for a big match and messaged me gloating

that he'd had eight fish in a couple of hours.

I tied on a 9ft Hanak tapered monofilament leader, then added another six feet of 6lb fluorocarbon tippet, forming a 10in dropper at the join. Counting six feet back up the leader, I added another dropper. Although Iain wasn't giving anything away, Ed reckoned he'd be fishing a coral-coloured FAB as his point, with red or green Crunchers or nymphs on the droppers.

There were half a dozen boats at the western end and a few bank anglers too. It was pretty obvious where they thought the fish were! I found a space, waded in to my knees and made my first

cast. The Blob on the point landed, floated for 30 seconds and then started to slowly sink, pulling those nymphs enticingly down with it. On advice from the experts, all I did was keep in touch with the flies using a slow figure-of-eight. Nothing.

I'd seen an angler on one of the boats land a fish, so there were feeding trout here. However, after a dozen or so casts I was on the move. Something interesting was starting to happen. After being overwhelmed by venues like Elinor in the past, I've learnt to trust my instincts. If something doesn't feel or seem right, then make a change. That can be in location or presentation. Yes it's a big

piece of water, but watercraft, the process of reading the water, is still vital.

I decided to make two changes. First, I moved into the teeth of a wind. Second, I swapped the buoyant Blob for a weighted Blue-Flash Damsel. My thinking was the fish were pressured by the boats and the bright sun was pushing them down.

After three casts into a likely looking spot I got my reward. I allowed the entire cast to sink and settle before moving it. Then, slowly retrieving, the rod was almost pulled from my hand. The fish tore left and right, then headed straight at me as I frantically got line back onto the reel. One thing I love about wading the margins



A darker, leaner trout with a well formed tail is evidence that this fish has been in some time.

“ This was no little stockie. This was a cracking Elinor beast, which had started to feed in fading light, thinking it was safe! ”

of these big stillwaters is the amount of control it gives you when landing fish. It went behind me into the shallows, leaping and turning, before I finally wrestled control. It was a superb, silver fish with a full tail. It had been a long time coming but it was my first Elinor trout.

Time To Move

I decided it was time to get away from the crowd. A long walk to the eastern end of the reservoir put me in the shallows. I switched weighted Damsel to the coral FAB, and within a dozen casts was into another fish, clearly a resident rather than a silver stockie. He was dark, angry and mean.

Two more followed. One, in a deeper swim, saw me catch with the Damsel back on the point. It was just a feeling I had that a fish was sitting lower in the water column and it worked. With the light fading, there was time for one more move in search of a bigger trout. I walked out so the water covered my knees. There was a likely looking spot

in open water between weed beds that were clearly dying off. Out went my cast, with the FAB and an orange-bodied Cruncher on the middle dropper.

There was activity. A giveaway disturbance on the surface as the Blob landed. As I retrieved, there was a pluck but I missed the take and cursed! Out I went again, my arms now tired from several hours of casting into the wind. I was in touch with the flies, I saw the tip of my fly line twitch and move as I felt the solid thud of a fish and I was in.

This was no little stockie. This was a cracking Elinor beast, which had started to feed in fading light, thinking it was safe! It was a brilliant fight,

one of those when you fear you'll lose, but soon it was mine! It was a fantastic way to finish the day.

I got back to the car, thanked Ed, tackled down and set off home. On the drive, I reflected on the lessons I've learned. It's been a long journey since putting Craig Barr's flies in a tree at Pitsford. There are so many things in our path as anglers.

Reward for those many hours spent casting down at the local park!

I now try and remove as many of them as I can. It allows me to focus on what's needed – to trust watercraft, think tactically and feel or read the water.

I'm now able to look after myself on a venue like this. I can't pretend it always works and my casting still falls over every now and then, but at least I now spend more time fishing than untangling leaders! **TFF**





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Follow us on



The Light Touch

With the low, clear conditions of the chalkstreams this winter, Ben Bangham goes light to tempt the spooky Test grayling.

We are at the start of my favourite time of the year for fishing. The leaves are dropping as well as the temperature, the banks are clearing out and the ladies are on the feed. Magic!

I have a real affinity with grayling; catching them simply makes me happy. I love the colourful days of autumn with the reds and oranges, bitterly cold, clear

and crisp days where the air seems so pure, (this autumn it's more like flip-flops and sun cream!) and the crunch of the frost-covered grass under your feet as you walk down to a river full of promises and normally devoid of fishermen. This is the time of year when I get to fish because I have fewer guiding commitments, although there is a greater demand for days fishing for grayling and pike than ever before.

I love to fish light when after grayling. The touch and feel that you get when you fish this way simply can't be beaten. I normally use long rods in the 1-wt to 2-wt category with a light French leader. Today I am using my trusted 9ft 9in 2wt Hanak Czech Nymph Superb matched with a 000# Czech Nymph line and a very light, long leader. This is my French nymphing outfit but the great thing about it is that you can also cast it reasonably easily



In low, clear conditions you need to fish at long range to avoid spooking the fish. A light rod will mean a more comfortable day's fishing.

Small generic patterns and the Disco Shrimp (right) in sizes 14 and 16 coupled with fine leaders are not the norm for this time of year but low water levels make them 'go-to' flies.



for the times when you need to fish at a longer range in the low, clear conditions that we have been faced with this autumn.

Leader Logistics

A fluorescent yellow spinning line with a 0.26mm diameter makes up the majority of my leader. I have 10 feet of this, to which I knot on a 15in clear piece of fluorocarbon of 0.24mm with a double grinner knot, then another double grinner at the end of this to some bi-colour indicator ending in a 1.5mm tippet ring. Once this is done I cover all the knots in a small amount of UV resin to make them nice and smooth, as well as making them stand out slightly better. With the bi-colour I make sure that the colour change is halfway down the indicator and I colour in a small section where the colour changes with a black marker pen.

So why do I colour in this section and why do I have the short section of clear line between the indicator and the 10 feet of my yellow leader?

There are two reasons for these gaps in the colour. Firstly, having them, whether it be the black marker or the clear line, means that your eyes can pick up any subtle

movements far more easily than if it's just one colour. The other advantage is that if I come to a really deep section I can let the indicator sink and use the join between the yellow line and the fluorocarbon as an indicator point to work with. This means that I have nearly another three feet to work with.

I change the tippet every time that I fish. I normally use 0.10mm copolymer for its suppleness. With the light rod I can go as low as 0.06mm if they are being difficult and the river is clear. If it is carrying some colour then I will go up to 0.12mm but never any heavier unless it is proper floodwater, which is very rare on the rivers that I fish.



FACT FILE: River Test

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Longparish

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www.flyodyssey.co.uk



The distance between your flies is dictated by the river conditions and techniques used. Two to three feet should suffice.



Softer, lighter rods allow you to apply more pressure when playing the fish without fear of the hook pulling out.

Measurement-wise, from the tippet ring to the top dropper I stretch out my arm and cut the section at my chin. Then, from my dropper to my point fly I do the same but cut it off at my shoulder. If I am having three flies then I repeat this measurement.

Small Flies

I tend to stick to size 16 flies and smaller with a maximum bead size of three millimetres for probably 90 per cent of my fishing. My two main flies are a Red Tag on the point and a Disco Shrimp (this is normally a size 14) on the dropper. It is very surprising how quickly small flies on light tippet can get down to where you want them. With the lightness

and suppleness of the tippet it seems to hold them up less and they can get stuck in the current and dragged down with it. I also think that it can sometimes help with hooking the fish because they seem to hold on a fraction longer, possibly because they can't feel the line on their lips. Who knows, it seems to work for me.

It just seems that most people go pretty heavy and big when it comes to grayling nowadays. Possibly because we know they are on the bottom, the river is quick, hence big, heavy flies. Just give the lighter stuff a go, though. I have had sessions in winter when the fish have been lifting right off the bottom to

“ The Test was extremely low and crystal clear. Great to see the fish, but not so great when it comes to catching them! ”



Keep a low profile and quietly approach the river in order to fish in the margins first.



Ben's light-tackle setup. Note here the coloured section within the indicator to help aid bite detection further.



the indicator twitch, setting the hook and the feeling the telltale thump of a big grayling as the rod arches round to take up the strain.

With the softer rods you can put a fair bit of pressure on the fish without having to worry too much about the hook pulling. Grayling have very soft mouths so an overstiff rod can sometimes contribute to hook-pulls. The softer, longer rods counteract this and give you a bit more confidence while playing them.

The Test On The Test

I decided to put the light tactics to the test by fishing Lower Mill on the River Test, which can be booked for the day through Fly Odyssey. This is a stunning fishery and has lovely grayling and brownies (when the season is right) to test yourself against.

Like most of the rivers in the area, the Test was extremely low and crystal clear. Great to see the fish, but not so great when it comes to catching them! As we all know, when you can see them, they can normally see you!

Because it was so clear, I started the session on my knees crawling to the river and making a couple of casts close in to see if I could get a quick fish in the net and then work my way up the stretch casting to gravel patches and visible fish. It worked and I managed a small grayling fairly quickly, which was great.

After that I lowered myself into the water because the bank here is pretty high and I wanted to keep myself off the skyline as much as I could, with the conditions being what they were.

It was very hard work with the fish not really seeming to be up for feeding. I could see them and get the flies to them but they didn't really want to move. Talk about frustrating! The only fly that seemed to be sparking was a small Disco Shrimp.

I did manage a few now and then but it was a case of covering as many fish as I could, hoping that one would eventually decide it was hungry and have a snack.

The advantage of Lower

take flies only a few inches under the surface in five to six feet of water. I would never have caught these with conventional grayling tackle.

The other huge advantage of using this light equipment is that you can use it all day so easily. Your arm is extended a lot when fishing in this style and when you are using 4-wt or 5-wts it can become a bit uncomfortable after a few hours. No such problems with this equipment.

Go Against The Norm

As well as this, I am sure that you have all worked out in fishing that sometimes going against what is deemed the norm can be a great way to catch fish. Often, the most success I have had comes when I visit a fishery that has been heavily fished by people using the traditional heavy bug, heavier rod methods. When they are used to being

caught like this they can become a bit shyer; the bites can be very delicate indeed. With the light tackle you can still detect these and catch the fish; if you are fishing heavier you might not pick up on them, so you will be missing fish without even knowing it.

I have been fishing this way for years and it still hasn't lost the excitement; watching

The Disco Shrimp was the standout pattern for the Test grayling.



TACTICS

The reward for a light approach. This old warhorse took some persuading in difficult conditions.

Mill is that there are plenty of fish, so the opportunity to cover lots of them is there. With them being so spooky and it being so clear and low, I don't think that I would have caught anything at all if I were using what could be seen as conventional tackle.

Making Moves

After a frustrating couple of hours I thought I would move down to the weir pool to see if the fish in there were being a bit more responsive. First cast resulted in a lovely looking rainbow that had made its way into the beat. It was a looker and gave me a great runaround.

“ There are no other fish we have with anything like the subtle colours that the grayling possess. ”

I moved further up the pool and soon latched into a really dark old warhorse of a grayling that had taken a liking to my Disco Shrimp. In the current of the weir it put up a fantastic fight. Its colours were exquisite, so many iridescent blues on the fins and scales. There are no other fish we have with anything like the subtle colours that the grayling possess.

With the rain threatening to ruin the day it was a snap decision to move back up to the area where I started, to see if they had begun to feed a bit more.

I approached the water in the same way that I did at the start, really low and close to the ground so as not to spook the fish. This time they were a bit more obliging and I had a couple of nice grayling

coming to the net before the much-needed rain set in and we had to call it a day. It's strange how the fish can suddenly switch on for no apparent reason and turn a fairly poor day into a pretty good one.

If you haven't tried this type of fishing then book a day with a guide who knows what they are doing and has the appropriate equipment. Or drag out a friend who does it and get them to show you. Just get out there somehow and try it. Once you do I guarantee you that your bank account will suffer and you will have some shiny new kit to play with! **TFF**



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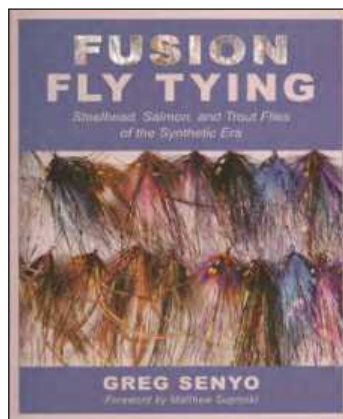
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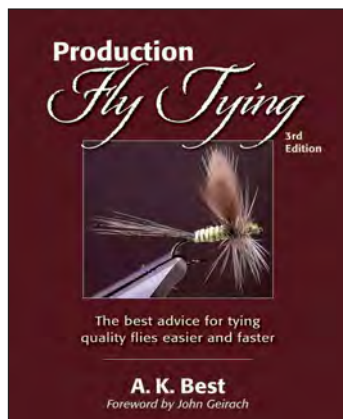
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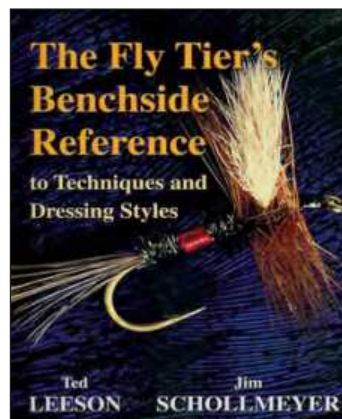
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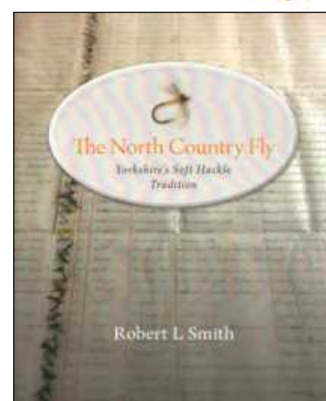
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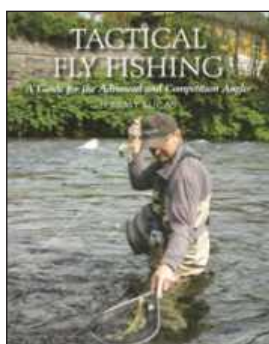
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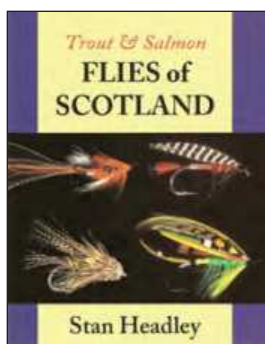
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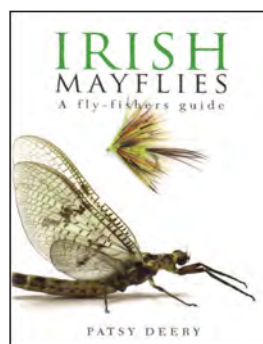
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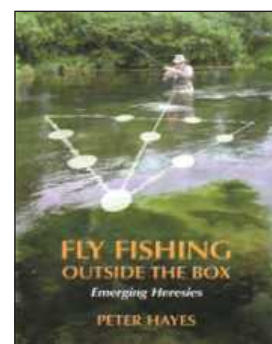
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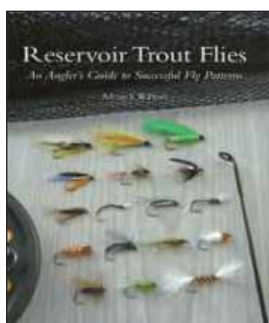
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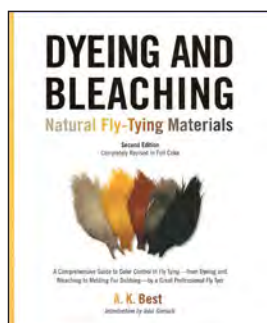
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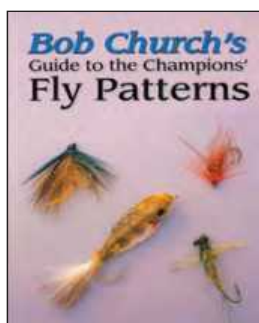
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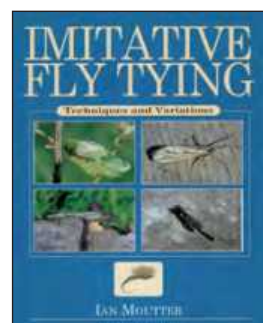
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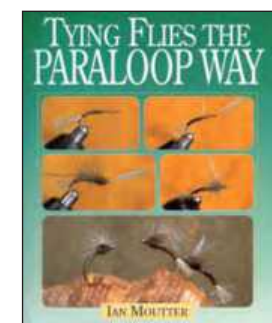
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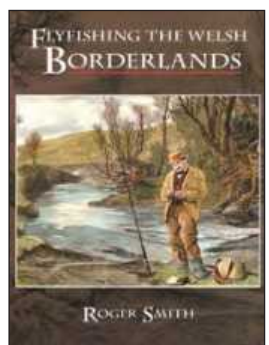
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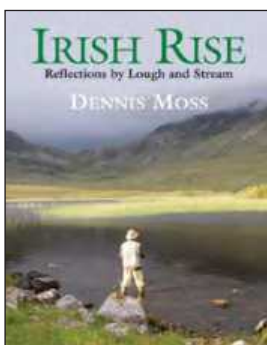
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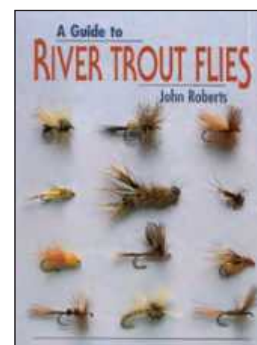
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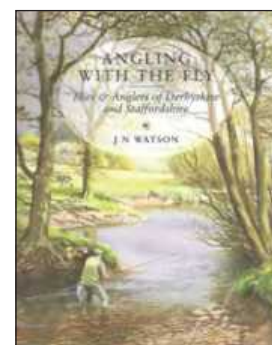
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News

JANUARY 2016

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Sunray Fly Line Competition



The six lucky winners are: Colin Guy, Alfreton; William Baigira, Dunfermline; Tom Saunders, Uxbridge; D M Dawe, Fownhope; Bob Cooper, Darwen and John Ridler, Darwen.



Healy Wins The Knockaderry Cup

The Knockaderry Cup was held on the Irish bank holiday weekend in late October. The event had to be transferred to Carrigavanry Lough due to an algal bloom on Knockaderry Lough. This did not deter the participants from having a great day's fishing. The winner was Barry Healy with seven fish, second was Paul Owens with five and third was Michael Twohig with four.

The longest fish went to Kevin Lafford at 64 centimetres.

Fish were caught on all methods – dries, wets and lures, with an intermediate line and Blobs, Boobies and the Cat's Whisker scoring well. With Carrigavanry being crystal clear it has gained a reputation for being a great venue for anglers on day tickets and has become Ireland's premier put-and-take water.

For further information visit www.waterfordflyfishing.ie



The Essential Fly Says Thank You!

Following another hugely successful year our friends at The Essential Fly are offering Total FlyFisher readers five per cent off orders if you use the voucher code T4ANKS in store or online at www.theessentialfly.com. The North Yorkshire-based fly fishing and fly-tying business offers a one-stop shop for flies, tackle, accessories and tying materials that is second to none.

It has been a fantastic year for the company with superb new purpose-built premises, new additions to its tackle ranges, with Greys, Shakespeare and Seaguar gear added, continued innovation in the release of new fly patterns and tying materials, the launch of its barbless fly

range and a customer base that extends to more than 50 countries.

The Essential Fly has an excellent reputation for its customer service and recently supported Total FlyFisher with a competition to win some of its great range of barbless flies.

One of the winners, Joe Baggott, commented: "It was a lovely surprise to receive a generous collection of flies from The Essential Fly this week. May I say a big thank you to them and the magazine. The flies I have won are good ones and a welcome addition. Now I need another box!"

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Opportunity To Join Angling Trust

Team England Fly Fishing Competitions Committee

The Angling Trust is inviting experienced, passionate and dedicated volunteers to support and deliver domestic and international game angling events through its Team England Fly Fishing competitions committee.

In 2014, Team England Fly Fishing (TEFF) fully integrated within the Angling Trust competitions structure to create Angling Trust Team England Fly Fishing (ATTEFF). To ensure a smooth changeover during this period a transition plan was laid out by the committee, the final stages of the plan called for open recruitment process for all volunteer roles within the new ATTEFF structure.

The ATTEFF committee will lead the development of competitive fly fishing in England through delivery of its National Championships and international performance in International Fly Fishing Association (IFFA), FIPS-Mouche competitions and the Four and Five Nations organising committees.

Clive Collier, ATTEFF chairperson said: "As part of our continuing transition, Team England Fly Fishing is facing many challenges but also sees many exciting opportunities. This is

why we are looking for people with the vision, attributes and skills to help AT Team England Fly Fishing achieve our ambition of being the number-one fly fishing nation in the world."

Volunteer roles include World and European team managers, Five Nations, Rivers and Bank team managers, Loch Style, Rivers and Bank international coordinators, Coaching & Development Pathway manager, Loch Style qualifier and National coordinators, Bank qualifier and National coordinators, Rivers qualifier and National coordinators.

Anyone interested in getting involved can find role descriptions, person specification and application form on the Angling Trust website www.anglingtrust.net/vacancies. You will need to be quick because the closing date for applications is Friday, December 18th, 2015. Appointments will be made by January 31st, 2016.

Further information can be obtained through Ben Thompson (senior competitions & talent development manager) on 07854 240177 or Stuart Wardle (ATTEFF governance secretary) on 07904 278889.



Scotland's winning bank team.

Scotland Win Gold

The sixth Stillwater Bank International took place in October at Woodford Fly Fishery, Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. This year's event saw teams of six represent Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales. Local knowledge suggested that it was going to be a tough challenge and those thoughts were confirmed during the practice days when fish were few and far between.

Competition day saw an early start, with teams greeted with cold, flat-calm water. The team walk to the fishery was followed by a poignant moment of silence in memory of Moc Morgan of Wales, who passed away earlier in the year. Moc had been a strong promoter and sponsor of this event from inception and made an incredible contribution to fly fishing over a number of years.

Each angler was to fish four 40-minute sessions in the morning and afternoon. The catch-and-release match was scored to FIPS-Mouche rules with points per fish and for every centimetre length of fish given.

England got off to a fast start, with eventual individual winner James Stevenson into two fish early on. It was going to be a tight match with every fish so valuable.

The results were announced with Scotland first with 14 fish, England 13, Ireland 12 and Wales five. John Brown had the longest fish at 57.1 centimetres. Fewer blanks and a superior size of fish helped Scotland achieve their third gold medal in six years at these championships. The team plan of sticking to flies in the team box ensured all team members contributed to the result. Next year the competition goes back to Garnffrwd Fishery in South Wales.

Results

1st Scotland, 14 fish, 133 place points, 15,140 fish points

2nd England, 13 fish, 152 place points, 13,180 fish points

3rd Ireland, 12 fish, 163 place points, 11,760 fish points

4th Wales, five fish, 235 place points, 5,060 fish points



Left to right: John Pearson, Brian Smith and Paul Gaskell join forces with Tenkara.

A New Tenkara Team

Following a 12-month period of informal assistance after the sad passing of Mike Roden in 2014, Paul Gaskell and John Pearson of Discover Tenkara have become official technical consultants to Brian Smith's Tenkara Centre in the UK.

John and Paul are the only UK Tenkara guides whose skills, knowledge and teaching have been approved by Japan's leading Tenkara experts, Dr Hisao Ishigaki and Masami Sakakibara. They both also have extensive expertise in traditional and modern European methods of fly fishing. Their existing fly fishing experience, coupled with immersive study in Japan, means they are recognised as the UK's leading authorities on Tenkara.

Together, the team is working to create a global centre of excellence for authentic Tenkara techniques, coupled with developing the highest-quality tackle that is a perfect match for those tactics. The collaboration will allow Tenkara Centre's tackle development to work hand-in-hand with the highest-quality teaching material, information and media produced by Discover Tenkara.

The partnership is particularly exciting because Paul and John will create much closer ties between elite Japanese Tenkara anglers and the development of the best tackle and teaching methods.

See more at www.tenkaracentreuk.com and www.discovertenkara.co.uk



Dilip Sarkar (centre), the Angling Trust's head of enforcement, with the team of six regional enforcement managers.

Angling Trust's Fight Against Fisheries Crime

Six former police officers with over 150 years of policing experience between them have been appointed by the Angling Trust to help in the fight against fisheries crime.

The new regional enforcement managers (REMs) will advise anglers on the law, raise awareness that poaching and fish theft are criminal offences, and work with the police, Environment Agency (EA) and other partners on fisheries-related issues.

Covering the whole of England, the six will be part of the Angling Trust's new Fisheries Enforcement Support Service, in partnership with and funded by EA rod-licence money. In addition, they will also be supporting staff on the Building Bridges project – aimed at encouraging migrant anglers to fish legally – and on the rollout of the voluntary bailiff service across the country.

The new REMs include the former head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, and high-calibre detectives and inspectors, and all have received commendations for their policing throughout their careers.

The Angling Trust's head of enforcement, Dilip Sarkar MBE, himself a retired West Mercia police officer, said: "This is a massive step forward

in the fight to protect fish and fisheries, and – from a non-government organisation – is an unprecedented initiative. The experience of the new recruits across a wide range of specialisms will give angling a distinct advantage and spells bad news for offenders. I am very much looking forward to working with my team for the benefit of legitimate anglers."

The Angling Trust has been at the forefront of angling enforcement since 2012 and in recent years led on the introduction of two ground-breaking multi-agency operations involving police, the EA and other partners targeting illegal fishing and fish theft.

Sarah Chare, deputy director of fisheries, biodiversity and geomorphology at the EA, said: "The Environment Agency is delighted to be working in partnership with the Angling Trust on angling crime. The appointment of the six experienced REMs is the next step towards the Team England wide network of eyes and ears on the riverbank.

"Volunteers will be trained in how to spot and report suspicious or illegal activity in their locality, allowing our fisheries officers to deploy intelligence-led patrols where they are most needed."

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Flies For All *Seasons*

An up-to-date version of the Jack Frost, the Cracker Jack has been extracting cold-water trout from venues across the country for Steve Cullen for the last three years. Now it's time to let the secret out...

It's funny how we fly tyers think we're ever so inventive and creative, when really all we're doing is tinkering with tried-and-tested patterns, rarely venturing too far from the norm. Why would we? At best you end up with a work of art to be admired and put in a case, or at worst a fly that no matter how hard you fish it, fails to elicit a response.

It's why we still use the likes of Waterhen Bloa, Snipe and Purple and the like; tried and tested, they work!

That's all very well for the wild brown trout of this fair land, but what about their American cousins? There are more of us fishing for rainbows than there are brownies. A sad indictment of the times, but there you go.

Rainbows are altogether a different breed, they are far more aggressive – most of the time – roaming over a far larger territory than the solitary brown in search of something to satisfy their constant hunger. What they really like is a lure, bright and in your face, one with

plenty of movement, a fly with colour and fished at speed to get their synapses firing!

The reservoir boom saw all manner of gaudy creations, some of which we still fish today – Cat's Whisker, Viva, Concrete Bowl et al. Bob Church came up with some beauties, but the Jack Frost, to me, was his best. "What about the Appetiser?" I hear you cry. Yeah it's good, tied in a tandem for pike, but not so good for trout, end of!

I used to fish the Jack Frost a fair bit in Scotland, but when I came down here things changed... fly tying changed! But I did utilise my less fancy version of the Jack Frost when it was really cold. For some reason the white and red combination works very well for cold-water trout. It had a white marabou tail, red fritz body and a white rabbit hackle, it was nothing fancy but it worked.

My real eye-opener was this fly tied 'booby style' at Farmoor II from January through to early March, the only stillwater I tended to fish during this time.

Fished three feet off the deck with a very slow retrieve the fly accounted for numerous fish, and big ones too, up to 6lb 3oz. Sadly, these last few years the temperatures have remained quite high through winter, so it's not been as effective.

However, this new updated Cracker Jack version, which you see here, has. I have been fishing with it on the same venue at the same time of year with slow-sink lines and it's been as effective as the booby was! More to the point, it's been working at other large waters. Now that fisheries seem to be open that little bit longer, I can fish them!

For fry feeders on Rutland and Draycote it's been a revelation. When dry it's just another lure, bright and in your face, but when it's wet it has that small fish look about it; the trout certainly think so.

It may take a little longer at the vice than my old one but that time is well spent, and it will give you the edge when conventional patterns fail.



Tying The Fly

Cracker Jack

Hook: Osprey Saltwater, size 12 **Thread:** Red **Eyes:** Pink bead chain **Body:** Pearl Mylar over red thread **Tail and wing:** White marabou **Tags:** Two lengths of Glo-Brite No4 either side of the tail **Flash:** Two lengths of Pearl Mirror Flash either side of wing **Thorax:** Red fritz chenille **Hackle:** White rabbit, in dubbing loop **Head:** Fiery red SLF or similar



01



Place the hook into the vice and wind the thread on behind the eye. Attach the bead chain and lock in place with figure-of-eight wraps and superglue.

02



Secure the tail, nice and long, and at either side attach the Glo-Brite. Trim this to about one centimetre.

03



Create a nice even body with the thread before attaching the Mylar at the thorax. Wind down and back up in overlapping turns before securing again at the thorax. Trim waste.

04



Tie in the white marabou wing with two strands of Mirror Flash either side, trim waste and tidy up.

05



Now tie in the red fritz, two turns are enough. Leave room for the hair hackle.

06



Create the dubbing loop, not too long – about two inches – and insert the rabbit fur. Spin the loop and then wind on as the hackle, secure and trim waste.

07



Now, create a dubbing rope with red SLF, wind in behind the eyes two or three turns. Add a drop of varnish to the tensioned thread and whip finish.

08



Finally, with Velcro pull the red dubbing and the hair hackle back with a few strokes. Although the fly looks good like this it looks infinitely better when it's wet and fishing.

For Best Results

Where

On pretty much any stillwater the whole length and breadth of the country. As with other fry-type patterns, look to fish it in and around any structure on the venue: dam walls, harbours, steep banks, inflows, outflows – you get the picture.

It's best fished from the bank because this is where the trout tend to be. Look to fish in eight to 12 feet of water if you can and make sure you cover the water thoroughly. I tend to start high up and work down. If it's stupidly cold, then from the bottom up!

When

I'm very happy to fish these the whole year through. It's a white lure at the end of the day and we all know just how good any white lure is!

For me, though, when the water temperature is low and the fish seem rather loath to get up and go, that's the time to give it a try.

How

As with most large lures, I like to fish them on their own. One fished on its own will entice fish just as easily as two or three on the same length of leader. It's just our insecurities that see us offering trout a host of options at the same time, unless we're nymphing or looking to put vast holes in shoals of easy stockies. One fly (lure) will surely suffice.

Any line from a floater to a full-on super-fast sinker will work. My favourite line is the Connect Series, Ghost intermediate. It has a great look and feel, casts really well but importantly it brings that fly back in a level plain – great for rainbows. Use a beefed-up 8lb leader; about 12 feet is good. On heavier sinking lines look to fish a longer leader. Trust me, it just fishes better.

Tying Tips

Hair hackles are not that difficult but what I would suggest when you create your dubbing loop is make sure that you wax the thread. Trust me, the fur will adhere to it far better; it saves a lot of heartache and swear words!



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Flies Of *The* Year

TFF contributor and Scotland international Kevin Porteous reveals his top fly patterns of 2015.



Shuggler

This pattern was passed on to me by my brother and turned out to be one of my go-to brown trout patterns. I have already highlighted the effectiveness of the Hulk in previous articles but if you team this fly up with it they are awesome.

It's designed to be fished hard and fast on sunk lines, giving the trout a split second to take it or leave it. When paired with the Hulk the double-hook-up rate is amazing.

Hook: Kamasan B175, size 10
Tail: Black marabou **Body:** Gold UV straggle **Wing:** Black marabou and gold Krystal flash
Head: Black deer hair

Peach Muddler

I was given a reminder of how effective this pattern can be by Tony Chalmers earlier in the year. Since then it has been a regular middle fly in a cast of three. Designed to be a small top-of-the-water pattern it excels at catching brown trout.

Hook: Kamasan B160, size 10
Tail: Mirage **Body:** Peach dubbing and Furnace Hackle **Rib:** Silver wire **Head:** White deer hair

Quiller

This Cormorant was nicknamed the Quiller by my fellow team members after they saw how effective it could be. I normally use the pattern as a middle dropper. It's tied on a B175 to give it a bit of weight. When fishing the Quiller washing-line style it quickly sinks the leader to the booby and holds in that deadly top foot of water.

After a Scottish National semi-final my boat partner quietly approached me for the exact pattern after seeing how well it could work.

Hook: Kamasan B175, size 10
Body: Natural stripped quill
Wing: Black rabbit tips
Thorax: Red dubbing
Cheeks: Jungle cock

Half Hog

I use this pattern just as much for rainbows as browns. The deer hair is tied in such a way that it allows the body to cock down in the water.

When the trout are feeding on terrestrials high in the water surface the Half Hog comes into its own. It's a fantastic dry fly but just as effective when retrieved slowly. I sometimes think the fish watch it from below and as soon as it's submerged like a drowned fly they pounce on it.

Hook: Kamasan B160, size 8
Tag: Glo-Brite No5 **Body:** Black dubbing **Rib:** Small mirage
Legs: Natural hopper **Wing:** Deer hair and black dubbing

The Hills Are Alive

Tom 'Doc' Sullivan takes a trip to the Ceimín hill loughs where the fish are as stunning as the scenery.

The western coastline of Ireland is a stunningly beautiful area. Stretching from the counties Cork and Kerry in the south up through Galway and Mayo and right up to Donegal in the north, there is some of the most spectacular scenery to be found anywhere in the world. Part of the beauty of this scenery lies in the high terrain, the hills and mountains. These ranges trap the moist air coming in off the Atlantic and bring a lot of water and this in turn gives us a lot of loughs! For us anglers that presents us

with a lot of opportunities.

Fishing hill loughs is a different type of fishing for those used to fishing the big Irish loughs and even further afield from fishing stocked reservoirs! For the most part you are in much wilder places, away from the madding crowd, in a

a bit of a trek to most spots so a good level of fitness is required. That said, it is not always the case. For example, there are a couple of loughs in the Partry Mountain range on the western shores of Lough Mask known as The Dirks. These are beautiful corrie loughs tucked into

valleys running into the cliff face of the mountains. They are situated at the end of bog

roads, so, even though they are at an elevation of 400 metres, you can almost drive right to the shore.

You must expect that the trout for the main part are

“The trout make up for their size deficiency by being there in great numbers and you can have a day of non-stop action.”

sometimes bleak, harsh yet beautiful area. To access these loughs generally requires a bit of a hike; you don't need to be triathlete material but there will be

The Ceimín hill loughs are set in some of the most spectacular scenery Ireland has to offer.

smaller, there are a couple of loughs that hold bigger fish but they are few and far between and often well-guarded secrets by the lucky few who know of them. However, the size of the trout is not the reason we fish them. They make up for their size deficiency by being there in great numbers and for this reason you can have a day of non-stop action

It's wise to travel light. Make sure you have the appropriate clothing and the key essentials for being out in remote areas.





in some of these wonderful waters.

Wet Fly Is The King

Wet fly is king for these loughs. Dry fly and nymphing will have their days but natural food tends not to be in abundance, so fish are foraging for any morsel that they can get. You can cover lots of ground with the wets.

I like to move along the shore, pick a point or rock promontory, and fish that area for a couple of minutes, fanning the water in front of me to cover every bit of it. Brown trout tend to be more territorial, so the onus is on

the angler to move to them rather than waiting in one spot for them to come to you.

Stocked trout tend to move around in paths so if you stay in one spot they will cross yours at some stage. This is not the case with their

wild brethren.

I use a standard 14ft three-fly cast and an intermediate line and vary between the slow and fast rates accordingly. The Airflo 40+ lines are perfect for this game. Firstly for their long-distance

A beautiful, butter-gold brownie, a typical fish of the Ceimín loughs.





No need for a landing net here. The fish are small and can be quickly brought to hand to ensure a quick release.



There are some boats available on the loughs but they're not for the faint-hearted!

casting to cover more water but also the fact that the running line is floating is a big advantage! This means it doesn't sink in the water when you are retrieving so it aerialises with ease on casting again.

It was with great interest then when staying in Lissyclearig, Kenmare, Co Kerry, this year that I listened to Davey Breen tell me about the Ceimín loughs (pronounced kaymeen) that are in the hills between Kenmare and Killarney and the good fishing he had in them. I consulted my bible, *The Loughs Of Ireland* by Peter O'Reilly, and couldn't find any mention of them; this aroused more interest. Davey, a serious and accomplished angler, is also a deerstalker par excellence and the coupling of these two attributes has led to him having an encyclopaedic knowledge of the wild southwestern mountains. It was enough for me to hear him talk of them and we arranged to go and throw a line on them.

The plan came to fruition and at the end of this summer I set out with Davey from his side of the hills to get to the Ceimíns. There was a moderate climb to 400 metres and the gradient wasn't too bad.

Davey led the way following a pre-ordained route that I couldn't spot. Because I was with someone who knew the surroundings like the back of his hand I was in safe hands. However, if you are ever planning to do this on your own then there are a couple of simple procedures to follow. Tell somebody where you are going and when you intend to be back, bring a map and a phone, food and water and wear appropriate clothing. A simple thing like a sprained ankle could turn out

to be a major problem.

The Sparkling Jewels

After about 45 minutes we crossed the brow between two hills and then the loughs unfurled below us, a tremendous sight, a chain of five connected sparkling jewels of water with features in each and every one of them that screamed fish. To this day it is amazing the feeling I get when I look upon a body of water and that feeling of apprehension is propelled all the more when

I know I have my fly rod with me.

The loughs lie in a valley and flow from east to west before they flow out down another hill and eventually work their way into Lough Lene in Killarney.

Our plan was simple, Davey would take the north slope of the valley and I the south slope. We would work our way down either side to the chain and meet at the bottom lough for a cup of tea!

I picked a likely spot on the Cliff Lough for my first couple of casts and I think it was the fifth throw that I saw the boil and on the next retrieve it all went solid and I caught my first Ceimín trout, a beautiful, well-marked fish of 10 inches that took my leggy Red-Arsed Peter.

The action continued all the way down and between that fly and the Black Jungle, by the time I met Davey for lunch I had caught five trout over eight inches (20 centimetres) with three of these over 10 inches. Davey had performed equally as good, better in fact, and he had six. A Kelly kettle was brought out and we had a welcome cup of tea.

After lunch we decided to take a run in the boat for a drift on the lower lough. The boat is not for the faint-hearted; boats that

“I saw the boil and on the next retrieve I caught my first Ceimín trout, a beautiful, well-marked fish of 10 inches.”

Davey Breen with a stunning yellow-bellied Ceimín brownie.



Pick the points and rocky promontories to start with. Keep on the move and cover as much water as you can.

INSPIRATIONAL

The walk back down is far more enjoyable than the one going up!


come here will never return from whence they came, this is their graveyard! We picked up a few more fish drifting on the outside of the reeds and then we returned to do some more shore fishing for the last hour or so.

At the end of the day we had caught in excess of two dozen trout between us. There were no big ones (by big I mean ¾lb to 1lb) but there would have been plenty of them between 10 and 12 inches. They were great sport indeed. It never ceases

to amaze me the different colours that you get in the fish – beautiful. We kept a few for breakfast because Davey had said that they were well worth it and on having them the following morning at the B&B I can say that they were only divine.

We made our way down from the opposite side that we came in and ended up on the old Kenmare-Killarney road, which is probably the easiest way to access the old keeper's cottage.

The beauty of hill-lough

fishing is that it doesn't require a whole lot of gear. A 9ft/10ft travel rod for a 5-wt or 6-wt reel, tippet material and a box of flies are all that's required. These can tuck nicely into a suitcase or take up no room at all in a car! If you are planning on doing some walking in these areas, then your walking boots and rain gear will crossover nicely. If you are planning a holiday on the western seaboard that isn't a fishing one, then these items won't take up much space. 

Local B&B Accommodation

Davey and his wife Carmel own Lissyclearig Thatched Cottage, in Kenmare, Co Kerry, a family-run B&B. This is located just on the Ring of Kerry, the most popular and scenic areas of Ireland. For more information check out their website lissyclearigthatchedcottage.com.

For more information about Tom Sullivan's guiding facilities log on to tomdoc.com.

Flies For The Ceimín Hill Loughs

The Black Jungle

Hook: Wet Fly size 12 **Rib:** Medium Pearl **Body:** Black seal's fur sub **Wings:** Two jungle cock feathers paired **Hackle:** Black hen

Delphi

Hook: Wet Fly size 12 **Tail:** Two jungle cock feathers **Body:** Oval silver tinsel **Mid hackle:** Black cock **Front Hackle:** Black hen

Red-Arsed Peter Leggy

Hook: Wet Fly size 10 or 12 **Butt:** Glo-Brite No4 **Rib:** Oval silver **Body:** Dark green seal's fur sub **Body hackle:** Dark red game **Wings:** Hen pheasant wing feather **Hackle:** Dark red game **Legs:** Knotted pheasant tail fibres

Jungle Bibio

Hook: Wet Fly size 12 **Butt:** Orange floss **Rib:** Oval silver **Body:** Black and red seal's fur sub **Body hackle:** Black cock palmered **Eyes:** Jungle cock **Hackle:** Black hen

Dark traditional patterns are the order of the day. Black is a very popular colour. However, another theme running through them is the predominance of jungle cock; it really works on flies for the loughs.

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Stop!
Rainbow season is here
Now

It feels like there has been a shift in the seasons, in particular the 'dog day' months that seem to last on the small waters from July to September, with winter not really kicking in until February. Now I've said that it will probably be a white Christmas!



Ten years on and reels of this design are long gone. I did, however, see one the other day when a client came for some tuition with some gear he had bought off eBay. It still didn't look or feel right!



So, Mike Kendall, where are you now? Do you fancy another challenge 10 years on? Are there any other young anglers who fancy taking the Stopwatch Challenge? E-mail me at andy.taylor@dhpublish.co.uk if you're up for it!



We had a great booby pattern for Brenig that used the standard Fritz, and the micro Fritz made great bodies for flashy Diawl Bachs. I've not fished these flies for a while now mainly due to the different products that are now out there – I for one can't resist buying fly-tying materials, hoping and praying that I create that next fish-catching fly!

Andy Taylor takes a look back to see what was happening in Total FlyFisher in the years of old.

January 2011



Some Like It Cold

Turrall's Dominic Garnett highlighted the need for both bright-and-bold and small-and-subtle patterns to tame small-water trout during the depths of winter. He felt that a lure approach should be your starting point on arrival to wake up the lethargic trout moving to nymphs, spiders and dries as the afternoon kicks in.

It's often the case that as the air temperature increases during the day, small hatches of midges occur and a swap to small, subtle patterns will account for a few fish. Winter fly fishing on small waters is fantastic and it's well worth getting toggled up for a few hours of rod-bending action. It amazes me just how many anglers still hang their rods up for winter.



The Good Grayling Guide: Steve's Bug

Why is it that a fly that can work so well for one person doesn't for another? Steve's Bug is one of these for me. I've fished with former editor Steve Cullen quite a bit over the years, both for pleasure and in competitions, and this is a fly that Steve has caught hundreds of grayling on, yet I, both with the patterns he has given me and ones I've tied myself, struggle to catch a fish on it!

Why? I know it works, I've seen it work, but sadly the fly won't work on my rod! Do you have a fly that works so well for your fishing buddy yet you struggle to get even so much as a take? Send your flies, thoughts and frustrations to us at TFF!



Wychwood Wader Bag

Every now and again there comes an item of tackle, luggage and clothing that you know will be around for years to come, and this is

one of those pieces. The wader bag from Wychwood is something I've been using for around four years. It's a welcoming sight at the end of a cold winter's day on the river; knowing that you can store those wet waders and gloves without fear of messing up your car, while the neoprene changing mat stops you hopping all over the place!

The many different compartments hold all my essentials comfortably and it acts as a reminder the night before to make sure I have all my bits of clothing. I just hope I get another four years and more out of it!

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We had some great pictures of cutthroat trout from 'across the pond'. Stunning fish from stunning locations. Here's just a sample...



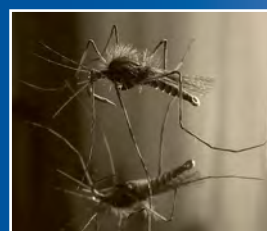
Nick Sliwkanich with a Westslope cutthroat from Alberta.



Neil Kreyche with a stunning Colorado Lake run cutty!

The Friday Flies

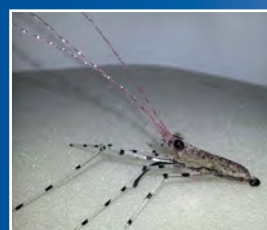
And of course Friday on the TFF Facebook page just wouldn't be the same without the Friday Fly...



Mosquito, tied on a size 18 Partridge K14ST from the vice of Markus Hoffman.



Dunkeld Dabbler, by Richard Garbett.



Glass Shrimp, by Karl-arne Andreassen.

Naiad

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Pimped-Up Patterns

Kieron Jenkins has three Christmas crackers to see you through the festive season...



ANGLER PROFILE:

Kieron Jenkins has been fly fishing on rivers and lakes for more than 15 years, focusing on competition angling throughout the height of the fishing season. His angling record is the envy of most, competing at every level for Wales, with his most prestigious achievement being a fourth place at World youth level.



Christmas Tree Snake

Hook: Fulling Mill Comp Heavyweight, size 10 **Thread:** Fl Green UTC 70
Body: 10mm Chartreuse Holo Straggle **Wing:** Black mink *10lb Braid Link* **Shank:** Fulling Mill Comp Heavyweight, size 10 (bend cut off) **Flash:** Silver Holo Angel Hair
Body: Red Hackle Fritz **Eyes:** Fl orange chain eyes

Over the past three to four years snake flies have really taken the angling world by storm, with many opting for this style of fly to target large predatory trout as well as recently stocked fish. In the correct sizes and colours, snakes work well as baitfish imitations when fishing around weed beds and structures.

It's only the last year or so that I've opened myself up to the world of snake flies, and they have been excellent to say the least – my onset of small-water fishing has certainly helped to sway the change; with the movement snake flies have to offer, the decision was a no-brainer.

One of my local fisheries, Garnffrwd, offers some outstanding brown trout fishing and more often than not they won't look at anything other than a large snake fly...

The Christmas Tree has been an extremely effective trout lure for a very long time and was one of my favourite flies when growing up on the small ponds of south Wales. Incorporating this design into a snake fly was an obvious choice because the colours for stocked fish are second to none. Black is always a standout pattern for many

venues and with the amount of rain we've been getting recently some waters tend to colour up – this pattern is very distinctive and will attract the attention of any willing trout nearby... and it's Christmas, after all!

Points to note when tying this fly:

- 1) The braid link is essential to landing the fish; make sure it's strong enough to withstand smash takes and secured correctly, otherwise it may pull through the front shank.
- 2*) Thread the braid through the mink skin to ensure the best movement possible, ensuring it is slack when securing in.
- 3) Use a material clip on your vice to keep the straggling hook from finding its way into your hand!



Cat Apps

Hook: Fulling Mill Barbless Czech Nymph, size 10 **Thread:** Glo-Brite Floss No11
Bead: 3mm slotted orange tungsten **Tail:** One White Perfect Rubber, one Chartreuse Perfect Rubber **Rib:** Mirage small **Body:** Glo-Brite Floss No11 **Legs:** One White Perfect Rubber, one Chartreuse Perfect Rubber **Finish:** Two coats Sally Hansen Hard As Nails



Again, another series of flies that have made their way into my fly boxes due to the small-water scene is the Apps Bloodworm. I find using Flexi-Floss a pain when tying, keeping it under control can be a nightmare when tying four or even six legs into the shank of the hook.

In recent years a good friend of mine Paul Osbourne, introduced me to Perfect Rubber, a thicker and more solid version of Flexi-Floss. The fly he showed me was quite similar to this, but tied in olive and used as a lure: pulled or figure-of-eighted through the surface – something I couldn't get to work myself, but coincidentally worked under the bung.

This pattern is best fished under an indicator with a lengthy tippet. One thing I've noticed about the Perfect Rubber is that it's fairly buoyant, so fishing it on a long drop beneath the bung allows the fly to fall and waver through the water column rather than plummet to a certain depth and hold. The legs of this fly are very tantalising when falling and it often picks up fish on the drop.

Caddis Jig

Hook: Tiemco 403 Jig Hook, size 8 **Thread:** Olive Sheer 14/0 **Underbody:** Ten turns large lead wire **Tail:** Ten strands Silver/Fl Green Funky Flash **Hackle:** Two turns brahma hen/brown **Body:** Hare's ear dubbing **Rib:** Medium copper wire **Thorax:** Pine squirrel dubbing

Caddis patterns are probably among the most widely used flies for grayling in the UK, next to the Pink Shrimp, of course. And one of the things I've noticed in recent years is that when fishing a Caddis pattern, you need something to 'stand out' and grab the fishes' attention; many anglers use floss or yarn to create the head, but I've found using a more visible material gets results. Over the past winter I've been using fluorescent dyed green and orange flash materials from Funky Fly Tying.

What I find tends to happen with a yarn or floss is that the colour fades when wet, so using a material in which the colour doesn't lessen can prove fruitful.

Grayling don't tend to move far to take a fly, so getting your flies in the correct zone to be taken is key; packing the fly full of weight is one thing, but keeping it slim and streamlined is another. Often you see anglers using bulky flies with tons of weight to get them down, but a slimmer fly with less weight will sink just as fast if tied correctly.

This pattern has done extremely well for me on the Welsh Dee, a river that is heavily fished by both Welsh and English competition anglers, and the fish can more than often switch off. In the deeper holes this Caddis Jig can pull out some of the bigger, warier fish. I tend to fish this jig on the lightest breaking strain I can get away with, which allows the fly to cut through the surface with less tension.

Points to note when tying this fly:

1) Keep the dubbing as fine as possible to let the fly fall through the water quickly. Pick out the dubbing with a dubbing brush or wire. I tend to use a natural colour thread (olive) to blend in for the body if the dubbing becomes too fine.

2) Use as many turns of lead as possible. This fly needs to be bouncing along the bottom where possible and packing it full of lead will give you this advantage.

3*) Funky Flash is a fluorescent tinsel dyed green; most floss or yarns that are used in Caddis patterns lose colour when wet and look less attractive. This material doesn't lose its colour and reflects nicely, giving a much more appealing fly when wet.



Points to note when tying this fly:

1*) Slotted beads are perfect for keeping the legs of the Apps Worm in place. Secure the bead in place with turns of thread behind and through the slot, keeping the open slot facing upwards, and then tie the Perfect Rubber into the slot.

2) Regarding the legs, the longer the better! I tend to keep my Apps and Squirmy Worms around two inches long – the movement is unreal!

3) If using Perfect Rubber try not to stretch the material when tying – it loses its elasticity and will not go back into shape. Keep a light tension when tying along the body and use a material clip where possible to ensure it's not stretched.



Ask The Panel

METHODS - FLY TYING - TACKLE - APPROACH - CASTING

We've all the answers to help make you a better angler

Get your fly fishing questions answered each month by our panel of expert anglers, or even send in your own tips and advice for other readers.



Wychwood

Meet This Month's Experts

Mike Low

Wychwood Game consultant Mike Low is a genuine fly fishing fishing all-rounder. A thinking angler, Mike loves the imitative approach to fly fishing and enjoys pursuing river browns.



Andy Taylor

TFF editor Andy Taylor has over 25 years' experience in fishery management. A qualified angling instructor and England international, Andy enjoys fishing stillwaters.



Andy Smith

Andy is an APGAI-qualified instructor for both trout and salmon, based in the East Midlands and is Pro team leader for Arctic Silver fly rods.



Glyn Freeman

Glyn is a full-time AAPGAI instructor, based on the River Eden in Cumbria. He teaches all forms of fly fishing.



What you need to do: It's simply a case of sending in your question for our experts to answer or your tips and advice for us to print and we'll take it from there.

Please include your full address details and ensure that we have a daytime telephone number so that we can reach you if we need to clarify any details.

Write to: Ask The Panel, Total FlyFisher, DHP Ltd, 1 Whittle Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 8RQ

E-mail: andy.taylor@dhp.co.uk. Please remember to leave your full name, address and telephone number.

Snaking In The Making

I have bought four new lines in the £30 to £55 price range. They all suffer from the same problem (straight out of the box) of memory coils. This is mainly affecting the weight-forward section. When trying to fish a static dry fly, the lines all come back towards you like a snake. They are fine if you are retrieving them. Could you tell me if the problem is caused during the manufacturing process? When the core is relaxed does the coating bunch up, causing the line to snake up? Stretching does not seem to work. (Am I not stretching it enough?) What percentage can you safely stretch a full 30-yard line without damaging it?

I have heard that using hot water to soften the coating might work. Do you know anything about this procedure – how hot, how long and so on?

George Hobbs, Wolverhampton

Andy Smith Answers

Being in the trade, as it were, I am very aware that there are some makes of lines on the market that do seem to regularly display the memory coils "straight out of the box", as you describe, and there's not really much you can do about it. It's like the line has a built-in slack-line element to it, and I have to agree it's not ideal.

Stretching rarely improves things, in my experience, and is only a temporary fix. Some lines will snap if overstretched so that's not an option, and honestly the idea of a hot-water treatment is more likely to make things worse because the outer coating will easily soften to the point of distortion and may even delaminate from the core.

In essence, the way the line turns out is influenced by how fast and at what temperature the machine that produces the lines is run at. Temperature and speed affect the flow and dispersion of the coating being applied around the core and that then affects how the finished line hangs on the skeens (racks) before they are

coiled up and packed. So yes, memory coils are more often than not due to mistakes in manufacture.

I've never found issue with the Greys Platinum fly lines. I worked for Hardy & Greys for 10 years and this sub-£40 line is a beauty that always stays straight, even after many seasons of use and abuse. I also use lines such as Scientific Anglers GPX and Lee Wulff TT, which I have never found to be other than dead straight. In the latest generation of 2015 Sunray tops my list. It has a range of super-thin lines that lay perfectly straight all the time. These are top end at £60 each. Specifically if dry fly is your thing, Sunray has a fly line developed with the help of Jeremy Lucas that just ticks all the boxes for straight-line presentation, even at distance.

Andy Smith



The Prizes

Wychwood is offering some great prizes for those questions answered each month by our experts.

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a Kill Kit – comprising a cast-aluminium Portable Priest and Diet Spoon – for each of the other questions printed.



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The needle knot offers a smoother connection when using a leader of the correct diameter.

Butt Knot, But Not

When attaching a new tapered leader – the kind with a thick butt end – I have always found it difficult to tie a loop with a small enough knot to attach it to the fly line without being too bulky. I have recently tried making a loop by first sanding down the first half-inch of the butt end to create a flat, tapered edge, and then folding it back to make a loop and adding a little superglue, using hackle pliers to hold it until it sticks. I then whip it with tying thread and add a touch more glue. When this dries, a coat of UV resin smoothes it off (see picture).

Does the panel have any other ideas of how to attach a thick-butt tapered leader to a fly line? The thick butts won't work with a needle knot.

Peter Chapman, Berwickshire



Peter Chapman's leader loop.

Glyn Freeman Answers

It sounds like a real hassle for a tapered leader! The smallest knot for the formation of a loop will be a perfection loop. They are very easy to tie and the size of the loop can be adjusted to suit. The trouble with having one loop attached to another is that it will affect presentation, especially when fishing dry fly on smooth water, where it will cause drag in the surface film. Another problem with those loops is that they will unbalance turnover when delicate presentation is needed.

Needle knots will not work when the core of the fly line is made of nylon or the level section is solid polyurethane for instance, a needle just cannot be inserted. You say the leader butt section is too thick, it sounds as if it may be a saltwater leader to be that. Most

trout leaders available will go through a fly line core very easily, it depends on how the task is done.

Run a needle (machine needle with flat base to hold) or a pin with the plastic head on up through the core of the fly line for a quarter of an inch and out the side of the fly line, then rotate a few times to make the hole stable.

Then thread the tapered leader via the thin end through the hole on the side and out through the core. Pull the leader from the core until it is roughly just thinner than the fly line.

You can now make a knot by twisting the butt section over the fly line four times, then make a loop and go through that and over the fly line three times. Start snugging it down carefully until it is almost butted up, then

begin sliding the whole affair down towards the hole where the leader enters, with equal pressure from both sides. Put your thumbnail over the hole to stop it sliding off the end and gradually work the leader out with one hand, following down the knot with the other until it is all tightened up.

Alternatively, after you have pulled the leader through to where it should be, cut the butt section to within a quarter of an inch, flatten with pliers and then add a drop of superglue and pull the butt section into the core until it just disappears. This will give you a seamless join.

Glyn Freeman

How Deep?

When fishing stillwaters, large or small, boat or bank, I find the most frustrating and time-consuming part of the experience is trying to establish the depth at which fish are lying.

In the absence of surface or sub-surface activity I am reduced to trial and error. On many occasions, due to poor fly selection I suspect my offering may sink past totally uninterested trout. Short of investing in WW2 Asdic or Sonar technology is there any advice the experts can offer?

D Smith, Ilkley

Mike Low Answers

A great question and one that we all, including myself and other seasoned anglers, will always struggle with. As you have stated, it is a case of trial and error.

There are, however, a few tips that could help narrow your search for that sweet-spot depth.

1. Local knowledge: Ask the fishery staff and locals. Never be too proud or shy to ask these



well-informed people where the fish are and what depths and lines are working. They might not have an exact answer but invariably will point you in the right direction.

2. Consider the wind: The wind plays a big role with line choice, be it from the bank or even the boat – although especially the latter. If fishing on a downward shore or from a drifting boat, take consideration that the movement of the boat and/or inward wind direction when bank fishing will affect sink rates of your fly lines and flies – in these cases we need to think about reaching for sinking lines. (This is particularly true in strong winds.)

3. The underestimated line: If you want to remove the temptations of line changing and the complications of line choice then look no further than your trusty floating line. A huge amount of various depths can be covered by varying retrieves, using different fly densities and lengthening or shortening your leader. This is my go-to line when searching for the feeding depth of fish.

4. Bung 'em: There is probably no better way of finding the exact feeding depth of feeding fish. This is

especially true if you are consistently catching fish in the top lip – this is usually a sign that they are cruising at the depth you are presenting your flies. Also, adjustable bungs save lots of time and allow small but quick changes to fishing depth.

5. Trusty patterns: We all have our favourite fly patterns for certain waters and more often than not these flies will catch fish. Count them down until you register a take or the bottom. Persevere with your tried-and-tested flies and perhaps change lines until you find the fish.

Mike Low



Mastering Casting

I am brand new to fly fishing and I'm really enjoying it so far. I'm using a Greys 9ft 6in 7-wt GR30 rod and GTS 500 reel, which I've been told is a good setup.

I've been practising casting at a local park, and mostly fish at nearby fisheries until I get the hang of things.

The problem I am having is that I can't cast far at all and when I do try to get distance my line loops up and falls in a heap in the water.

Can you give me advice or any tips to get some distance? I've watched online videos but wonder if I will ever get the hang of things? I love fly fishing and want to improve.

Mrs Ashley Herkes, East Lothian

Andy Taylor Answers

My advice would be to spend time with a qualified game angling instructor. Two or three short sessions should help improve your casting and all-round fly fishing technique. They will be able to look closely at the tackle you are using and your casting and advise accordingly. You can look online for your nearest instructor with the Game Anglers Instructors Association www.gameanglinginstructors.co.uk.

The rod you have is fine, although I perhaps would have opted for a 6-wt. What is important is the fly line. The twin-coloured floating lines are good because they will give you an idea as to how much line you are comfortable with when casting. With single-coloured lines I tend to place two marks

with a permanent marker pen at appropriate places to use as a guide.

There may be several reasons why your line falls in a heap – overloading the rod (too much line), a low back cast, poor timing, the positioning of the rod on the forward cast, and so on. Without watching you cast it would be difficult to give the exact cause and solution.

Distance is something most fly anglers are obsessed by, even me! Remember there are just as many fish close in as there are out in the middle! A well-presented fly at a range you are comfortable with is better than everything landing in a heap! You will get the hang of casting and it's like anything new – it takes time.

Andy Taylor

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Loynton Estate TROUT FISHERY

Top-dropper success as the Loynton trout soon take a shine to David's convertible buzzers.

Like every other angler this season, I've had a few exasperating days when weather conditions seemed a million miles away from the forecast – a predicted wind speed of 12mph nudging 25mph and occasional sunny spells that lasted virtually all day. Often that eagerly awaited ideal day becomes a real struggle. While I still managed to pull a fish or two on most adverse days by digging deeper than usual into my fly boxes, I repeatedly wished for something that I hadn't got.

On two boat fishing days, the bright and windy conditions totally demanded a fast-sinking line to get anywhere near the depth required and this had to be matched with a speedy pulling retrieve; my usual efficient figure-of-eight method simply couldn't handle it. This was followed by a day bank fishing small waters when the trout were extremely picky, insisting

on small imitative flies being

moved quickly and much deeper than a floating line could manage. Finally, there was another very rough day on Draycote Water in the last week of May, with my saviour being just one little nymph on the top dropper, which convinced me to go to work on the (now) obvious solution without delay.

What I needed was a set of my reliable buzzer patterns tied nymph fashion. This will also interest all the flyfishers, and I know there are many, who simply cannot stand the extra-slow twiddly-twiddly approach and feel confident and in control only when properly pulling their flies back with some regularity.

I am a huge fan of grub hooks for buzzer pupae patterns. They look very realistic and certainly work best combined with a floating line, when the flies are allowed to just sink and simply bobble about down under,

virtually static. I haven't come across a good buzzer venue yet where, given the appropriate conditions, this fails to work brilliantly. However, when weather conditions are entirely unsuitable, for instance when your boat is really belting and bouncing along on a speedy drift with a little crabbing thrown in for good measure, trying to get this right with a fast-sinking line can sometimes be physically impossible and a huge waste of time.

Likewise, when bank fishing small waters, trout tend to react very quickly to periods of bright, hot sunlight, which immediately sends them down as deep as possible. Then the only way to succeed is to get the flies right down among them, often just above the lake bed, and maintain something near that depth throughout the entire retrieve.

Pulling back the (grub hook) buzzers quite swiftly gives them the 'whirligigs', making them spin like tiny propellers, rendering them absolutely useless. Simply tying the exact same buzzers on straight (shank)

The convertible buzzers account for those fish that have been in a while.



The Coffee Cup at Loynton offers a great breakfast or some tasty home-made cake. It's well worth the break in your day's fishing!



The Convertible Buzzers

Bruiser Nymph

Hook: Fulling Mill 31530 Competition

Heavyweight, sizes 12 to 10 **Tying**

thread: Black **Tail:** Pinch of red game

hackle over black hackle **Body:** Black

tying thread **Rib:** Stripped natural

peacock herl (optional varnished with

Hard As Nails) **Thorax cover:** Brown

Head: Black tying thread **Head hackle:** Black hen/cock hackle



Black & Silver

Hook: Fulling Mill 31530 Competition

Heavyweight, sizes 12 to 10 **Tying**

thread: Black **Tail:** Black hen/cock

hackle **Body:** Black tying thread

Rib: Fine silver wire

Thorax cover: Silver mylar

Head: Black seal's fur

Head hackle: Black hen/cock hackle



Red Arse

Hook: Fulling Mill 31530 Competition

Heavyweight, sizes 12 to 10 **Tying**

thread: Black **Tail:** Black hen/cock

hackle **Butt:** Red holographic

Body: Black tying thread

Rib: Fine silver wire

Thorax cover: Red holographic

Head: Black tying thread **Head hackle:** Black hen/cock hackle



Pearly Green

Hook: Fulling Mill 31530 Competition

Heavyweight, sizes 12 to 10 **Tying**

thread: Black **Tail:** Black hackle

Body: Black tying thread

Rib (1): Pearly mylar (spaced turns)

Rib (2): Fine copper wire

Thorax cover: Pearly mylar

Head: Black tying thread **Head hackle:** Black hen/cock hackle



Two-Tone Olive

Hook: Fulling Mill 31530 Competition

Heavyweight, sizes 12 to 10

Tail: Sage/olive hackle and few

strands olive lure flash

Shellback: Few strands olive lure

flash **Body:** Dark olive tying thread

Rib (1): Light olive tying thread

(spaced turns) **Rib (2):** Olive wire tied over shellback

Thorax cover: Olive

lure flash **Head:** Dark olive tying thread **Head hackle:** Sage/olive hackle



A slow figure of eight is the standard retrieve for these patterns. Watch the line for takes.

hooks does help I know but the impression, when the flies need to be constantly 'swimming' along, still doesn't really work for me. So, when you really have to be a puller rather than a twiddler, these converted patterns are the perfect compromise.

The simple idea is to pick out the main properties and colours of the buzzer dressings and adapt them to suit straight-shank hooks, adding a short tail and maybe a pinch of head hackle. The beauty is that these straight buzzer-style nymphs can of course be used on literally any line, from floater to fast sinker, because they are effective at any depth and almost any (reasonable) speed of retrieve. Like other buzzers and nymphs, they can be mixed and combined on the leader with mini lures or traditional wet flies and so on.

To properly put these new patterns to the test, I invited my fishing mate Alan Greenhalgh to join me at Loynton Fishery, near Norbury, Staffordshire.

Loynton is a well-established small-water fishery with first-class facilities, including a very smart Scandinavian-style lodge and café overlooking the lakes. The ladies here are always welcoming and really keen to (freshly) cook to order, so we couldn't resist starting the day with a hearty full English.

The three spring-fed lakes may be small but they hide surprising depths, exceeding 20 feet in parts, and they hold fish from 2lb to 20lb plus.

All three pools invite different methods of fly fishing, from dry fly to nymphs and buzzers plus, of course, lures on a sinking line.



The Black & Silver – a deadly buzzer pattern but equally effective once converted to a nymph.



The downwind bank is always likely to hold a few fish. Vary the colours of your flies on your cast until you find the winning combination.

Importantly for small waters, the drop-off into deep water is often right under your feet and this enables working your flies right into the bank – perfect for this time of year. While there are just enough mature trees and shrubs to create a natural feel around the margins, there's masses of space in most areas for clear back casting.

Natural fly life is quite prolific, with good buzzer hatches through the season as well as damselfly and evening sedges and suchlike in summertime, and daddy-longlegs aplenty in

autumn. Impressively for a small-water venue, it's often the case that each of the three lakes demands an individual approach. One can fish really well using small nymphs or dry fly and another will produce best results only by fishing deep lures. Often the water clarity and colour of

each pool varies and this alone invites different methods of how to get the best from each one. If in doubt, resident fly fishing instructor Steve Yeomans is on hand to advise.


The modified flies were given a thorough trial in different ways and using different lines. A single nymph, a team of two and three patterns and also a mix with attractor lures on the top dropper were all given a good workout.

As expected, Loynton didn't let us down. By mid-afternoon Alan and I managed a combined total of 18 fish, all to the new flies on all three pools. The rainbow trout were surprisingly strong and in excellent condition, with each and every one demanding a

proper fight regardless of size or weight – there's no bullying these beauties hastily to the landing net.

Since then the new convertibles have also worked at other fisheries, including bigger reservoirs at Draycote and Ravensthorpe, making the overall results more than good enough to earn a rightful place within my ever-expanding fly collection.

So, here's my short list of indispensables for conversion: The Bruiser, Black & Silver, Red Arse, Pearly Green and Two-Tone Olive.

I've no doubt that many readers will have their own special and favourite buzzer patterns that will be ideal for conversion. 



Take a look at your most effective buzzer patterns and turn them into nymphs this winter.

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Flies Of *The Year*

International angler, TFF contributor and member of the highly successful Welsh Hawks, David Hoppe shares his top stillwater flies of 2015.



Gazza's Brown Bitz

Without question, this fly has been my 2015 season get-out-of-jail fly.

When conditions are testing, the fish aren't pulling and my bass bag has been empty, this fly has come to my rescue on more than a handful of occasions.

I have also had some spectacular days drifting across the middle of Draycote Reservoir, where pristine silver fish have confidently top and tailed over this fly.

(Gareth Dixon Comp Flies)

Red Nemo Cruncher *(with legs)*

From August onwards this fly has always been on my cast. Fish from many of the Midlands reservoirs have literally been slamming into it, ripping the line from my hands.

On Grafham, the fish appear to take the fly as a shrimp; on Rutland, as a terrestrial or daddy.

This fly helped our team – the Welsh Hawks – take Bronze at this year's Anglian Water International Final held on Rutland.

I have most success fishing with a RIO midge tip, trundling the flies just below the surface.

(Flash Attack Flies)

Biscuit Foam-Arsed Blob

This fly has easily hooked me the most fish during my 2015 season.

I caught well early season using two of these flies on a Di3, ripping them back then hanging the flies. Often the fish would take the fly 10 seconds into the hang!

Later in the season, fishing two of these (with two nymphs between) on a floater, or midge tip with a slow retrieve became devastating and helped me win individual spot at this year's Anglian Water Welsh Final held on Llyn Brenig, landing over 20 fish, all on the FAB.

Fishing with a midge tip or floater, the slower the retrieve, the more fish you will catch!

(Fulling Mill)

Gold & Silver Snake

Love them or hate them, snakes or leaches catch big fish and this caught me some absolutely stonking fish from Lechlade, Farmoor, Roxholme and Graiglywyd during 2015.

I have found that a RIO Hover line complements the weighted head of this fly, allowing me to fish it slowly, with the occasional sharp pull of the fly line to entice the take.

(Flash Attack Flies)





The Horseshoe Approach

Greys Pro-Team member Martin Stewart reveals his horseshoe approach to covering a river when grayling fishing, with devastating results on the mighty Tweed.

When I approach any river that has a good head of grayling in it during the winter months, I tend to look at rivercraft in a different way to perhaps the majority of anglers.

The most common method of fishing for grayling is of course the traditional Czech nymph method, with heavily weighted flies, starting from an upstream position and slowly working down a likely looking grayling run.

For me, though, I think you

are missing an opportunity here if the grayling are really feeding.

Sectioning The River

I split the river into three sections: the side nearest to me; the middle – which is the likeliest of lies – and the far side if accessible. The reason for this is that I can quickly work upstream pitching my flies into the less likely looking areas as well as the middle section of the stream.

This enables me to do two things. First of all I can cover any potentially spooky

grayling without them seeing me and also as I am working upstream with each footstep I will be stirring up the riverbed. This can really bring the grayling closer into you as food items such as caddis larvae and stone clingers get swept away from the disturbance – it can be like a fast-food chain behind you and can really bring the fish on to feed heavily.

So, after moving upstream having hopefully picked up a few fish, I then move more into the middle section, working downstream this

Euan Martin sections the river using the horseshoe approach to ensure he covers all parts of the water.



The Tweed holds some HUGE grayling – Martin Stewart caught this 50cm fish by 'dead drifting' the flies.



time with a view to pitching my flies into the areas that I haven't fished yet; dead drifting them and letting them swing up to the surface down below me where I have just walked up.

I always approach my grayling fishing like this on large freestone rivers such as the Tweed and Tummel, as I feel that the grayling really do react to the disturbance of the riverbed.

You need to take great care with this, though, and it shouldn't be associated with shuffling. If you are fishing

rivers such as the Tweed then there will be salmon spawning so please be careful not to disturb the redds when

approaching from an upstream or downstream position.

The other reason I approach from downstream first of all is to try and figure out how the grayling are reacting to the fly. By working upstream quickly I tend to strike early and not let the flies come down

below me, introducing an induced take, which can be devastating. Then, on every fourth or fifth cast I dead drift my flies right round to see if the fish are wanting the flies without movement or if they are taking the flies when they gradually lift naturally off the bottom as they swing up to the surface.

Implementing The Horseshoe Approach

I had a great day's fishing last grayling season when fellow Scotland team member Euan Martin came down to the River Tweed for a cast. When we arrived on the river it was a cold, frosty morning with some snow still lying on the fields from the previous

couple of days. There's just something special about fishing on these cold, crispy days.

We discussed tactics over some fresh coffee and bacon rolls and I explained to him that I had been doing quite well this season with the horseshoe approach to the river, which Euan found quite interesting.

“I caught two absolute lumps, the first at a whopping 52cm and the next at 48... River Tweed grayling fishing at its best.”

After demolishing the rolls (nothing better to start a day's fishing) we tackled up. My setup for the day was the Greys 11ft 3-wt Streamflex, a perfect rod for all-round nymphing on larger rivers. It offers really good line control, especially when reaching for the furthest section of the river towards the opposite bank. I have also been using the Ikon Nymph line, produced by my friends from Finland's fly fishing team, and attach a 30mm length of Hanak Bi Colour nylon for indication. Also, I like to use a heavier reel when using longer rods for nymphing, in the 5 to 7-wt range to help balance the outfit and keep that rod tip up.

Three-Fly Approach

In terms of flies, we both opted for a three-fly setup. I started with an Orange Tag Nymph on the top, a Pheasant Tail Nymph on the middle dropper and one of my Caddis Bombs on the point. Euan opted for the same but had a Pink Shrimp on the top dropper. My go-to nylon for any type of river fishing, from wet/dry-fly fishing to the duo setup is always 0.12 mm Stroft. The

thinner the nylon, the quicker the sink rate.

This is also the reason why I tend to use 2 and 3-wt rods now for most of my fishing. With the soft rod tips they are able to absorb any sudden movements, which can help stop break-offs from fish when using thin nylon.

As Euan was my guest for the day it was only right

that I let him have the first chuck, with myself slowly working up behind him. We worked up the outer and middle section without any success so I came out of the water and let Euan work back down the middle and outer section very quickly, but again with no success. It was only after searching three or four different runs that we finally connected with a fish.

I'm a firm believer in keeping on the move while targeting grayling. If you don't catch anything within 10 to 15 minutes maximum and you have thoroughly fished the run through, covering quite a bit of water,

Euan Martin with a superb 49cm fish that fell to the PTN.



then it's time to move on. What you have to remember is that fly fishing is a form of hunting – the fish don't come to you, you have to find them!

Find The Gravel

So what I look for in a typical grayling run is depth. Grayling tend to shoal up during the colder months on deep, flat, gravelly bottoms. Some of the best runs on larger rivers are those with a number of features at the neck of the stream, which produce good flow running

into a long, flat, deep pool.

You don't tend to pick up fish at this time of the year at the neck of the runs as the water is too fast and fish don't want to waste too much energy during the colder months. I would expect to pick up fish where the medium-paced water meets the slower water just as the main run of the stream is deepening off.

Forty-Plus Fish

This is exactly what we found to be the case in the next stream we walked to.

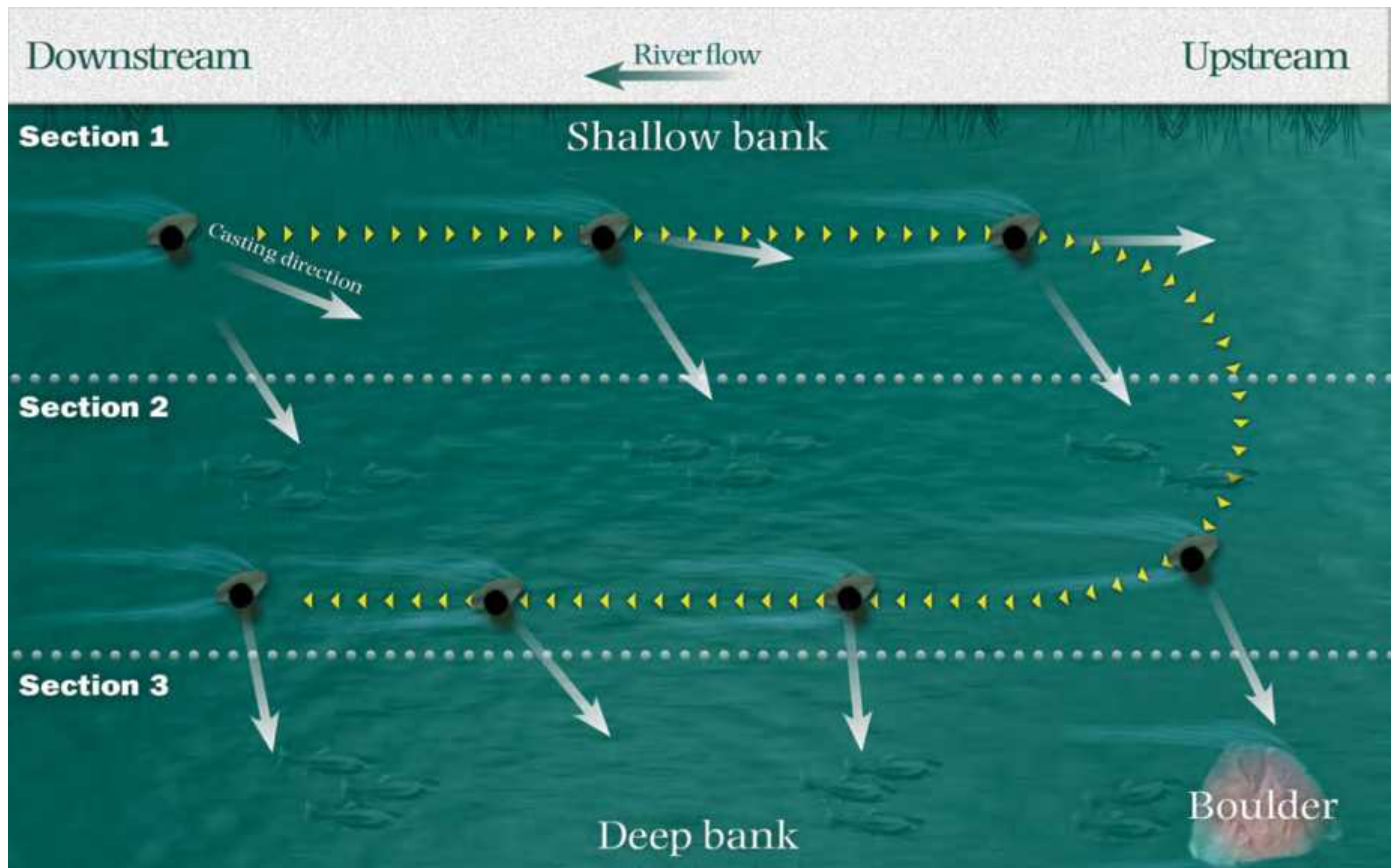
We started off downstream, working back up into the neck of the run. We didn't hit fish straightaway but after changing to heavier point flies to get down quicker we began picking up the odd fish.

I always start off as light as possible, according to the flow rate and depth of the water. We started off with a 4mm tungsten-beaded point fly with a leaded body but quickly changed to one with a 4mm bead and a medium tungsten jig back behind it to help get us down quicker.



The large 'sail' of the grayling. This is what gives these fish their power.

The Horseshoe Approach



Almost instantly this seemed to work, as Euan connected with the first fish of the day on the Pheasant Tail Nymph.

You couldn't have asked for a better start, as this was a cracking lady at 49 centimetres. We fished upstream through the run quite quickly, taking a few smaller fish between the

30cm and 40cm marks.

Interestingly, all the fish came to the dead drift taking the nymphs as they trundled past our position, and not the induced take.

We quickly worked our way up to the top of the run, moving slightly further out to target the middle and outer sections of the

stream. What followed was unbelievable.

We worked our way back downstream and in quick fashion I caught two absolute lumps, the first at a whopping 52 centimetres and the next at 48, both taking the Pheasant Tail Nymph with the Ice Blue Flash back. Euan then took

one at 45 centimetres and both of us caught a fair few more just under the 40 mark. This was River Tweed grayling fishing at its best.

Having fished this run through the takes dried up so we decided to grab another coffee and rest the run for a good 20 minutes before going back in again.



Look for the runs where there is a good flow running into a smooth flat pool. Don't rule out fishing over where you have just walked.

Martin Stewart

Greys Pro Team and Scotland team member

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martinstewartflyfishing.co.uk

www.martinstewartflyfishing.co.uk

Light 2-wt and 3-wt rods absorb and cushion any sudden movements, which helps avoid break-offs when fishing thin leaders.

The flies that had done the damage so far were the PTN with the ice blue pearl as a wing case and the Orange Tag Nymph with a silver bead. Having talked tactics over coffee we decided to keep the PTN on the middle dropper and change the point fly to a black bead and the top dropper to a Pink Tag.

Having warmed up, we were raring to go again. We went back into the run that had just produced a few good grayling, working back upstream for just an out-

of-season trout. But on the way back down we started to connect, with the fish again falling to both nymphs on the dead drift.

Nothing special that time down but we kept ringing the changes to the flies and the fish kept coming, and it was a fitting end to the day for me to land another lump of a fish at 50 centimetres.

To recap on my horseshoe approach to river fishing, by working upstream this enables a stealthy approach to any fish that could be

A 50cm grayling doesn't come along too often and isn't commonplace in UK rivers. Careful release is essential.



spooked by your presence. It also gives you the chance to find out how the fish want the fly presented and ultimately it helps you break down the stream into manageable sections to make sure you are covering as

much water as possible in a short space of time.

I urge anyone who is willing to brave the cold this winter to try this approach, rather than just starting at the top of a run and bugging your way down in traditional



Pink Tag

Hook: Jig hook, sizes 12 to 16

Bead: Tungsten silver or gold to match hook size **Thread:** Red Nano Silk **Tail:** Glo-Brite No2 **Body:** Spun natural hare's ear and peacock Spectra mix **Rib:** Small wire, same colour as the bead **Hackle:** Spun CDC **Thorax:** Hare's Ear & Peacock Spectra dubbing



Orange Tag

Hook: Jig hook, sizes 12 to 16

Bead: Tungsten silver or gold to match hook size **Thread:** Red Nano Silk **Tag:** Glo-Brite No5 **Body:** Spun peacock Spectra dubbing **Rib:** Small wire, same colour as bead **Hackle:** Spun CDC **Thorax:** Peacock Spectra dubbing



PTN

Hook: Fulling Mill Czech Nymph, size 16 **Bead:** Copper or gold

Thread: Brown Nano Silk **Tail:** Coq-de leon (dyed red) **Body:** Three fibres of cock pheasant tail **Rib:** Small wire same colour as bead **Wing case:** UTC Ice Blue, small **Thorax:** Natural hare's ear



Caddis Larva

Hook: JMC Curved Hook, sizes 10 to 14 **Bead:** Black/copper/silver/gold/orange/pink

Thread: Brown UTC thread and brown Nano Silk **Body:** Lead with small lead wire, covered up with UTC thread, tie in Nano silk and dub with tan Nymph Dubbing **Rib:** Small wire same colour as bead **Thorax:** Natural hare's ear mixed with peacock Spectra Dubbing

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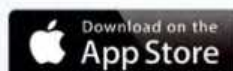
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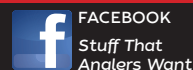


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On The Bank

Chatton Trout Fishery

England international angler Simon Robinson shares with us the hotspots and flies on the prolific lakes of Northumberland's Chatton Trout Fishery.

Chatton is without doubt one of the best and most well maintained fisheries in the north of England. It is very popular and was the venue for the 2013 English National and 2014 Home International bank events.

Established in 2007, the fishery comprises three lakes: Chatton, Dunnydeer and Ross. Each lake is between three and four acres in size having an open plan with no casting obstructions. All three lakes are stocked to the same levels, however all three are slightly different in

terms of their characteristics and how they can fish on any given day.

For me, it is the differences between the three lakes that makes Chatton such an interesting and often challenging place to fish, as you will often have to change methods totally to be successful as you move between the three pools.

In order to shoot this feature I visited Chatton on a cold and blustery winter's day; not the best of conditions but, as is normally the case, the fish were willing to take provided I was able to find the

correct methods on the day. As I moved around the lakes most of my fish came to lures fished on an intermediate line; however, from past experience I know this was mainly due to the cold conditions. I have also won matches on Chatton with indicator methods and on other days with tiny dries, so I always keep an open mind when I visit!

With this in mind, this is my guide to Chatton based on my experiences of fishing the venue in various conditions over the past seven years.



FACT FILE:

Chatton Trout Fishery

Chatton, Alnwick, Northumberland
NE66 5RF

Contact: 01668 215226

www.chattontroutfishery.com





Chatton Lake

Closest to the fishing lodge, Chatton was the first lake to open to the public and so is the most established in terms of natural fly life. As a result of this it is often the best lake to fish natural patterns, particularly during the summer months.

It also has the most features for the angler as it has three narrow arms that often hold lots of fish, which, although easily covered also quickly become wise to most patterns and can provide a real challenge to the visiting angler.



Three to try at Chatton.

1

THE LODGE CORNER

The corner of the dam closest to the fishing lodge is one of my favourite spots on the lake as it always seems to hold a concentration of fish. There is a reed bed on the corner and fish often hold close to this area. Depending on the wind direction any method can work here; however, I have found that Diawl Bachs on a floating line or Damsels fished on an intermediate will often score well, particularly if a southerly wind is blowing into the corner.

2

STONEY POINT

This is an excellent place to fish, it gives the angler access to plenty of open water and the ability to fan cast as required. On the day of my visit I took several fish quickly on a black lure before moving.

This is a peg to fish at distance either with lure or indicator methods; you have access to water in the centre of the lake that is difficult to reach from other pegs and as a result it can be an excellent place to fish, particularly on busy days when the anglers can push the fish out from the bank.

3

THE THREE FINGERS

The three narrow arms opposite the lodge are some of my favourite places to fish on Chatton Lake. They tend to hold large numbers of resident fish, which can be very difficult to tempt. As a result, nymphs and small dries can be the best methods in the warmer months, while in winter an indicator with a buzzer or egg pattern can be very effective.

It is often worth keeping a low profile as fish will often cruise very close to the margins under your feet.



Dunnydeer Lake

Dunnydeer is often the most challenging lake at Chatton. While Chatton and Ross tend to have some colour, Dunnydeer is almost always the clearest of the three lakes and in the summer is often gin clear. It is also the deepest of the pools.

I have found the fish in Dunnydeer respond to methods that are complete opposites; the fish are either feeding close to the surface, often on very small food items, or holding very deep and you need to fish very deep to get any success. The mid-water layers, which hold fish on Ross and Chatton, don't seem to produce as many fish on Dunnydeer.

It is often best to carry a light dry-fly or nymph rod on Dunnydeer as the fish will often feed right under your feet and can be seen cruising in the margins. At the opposite end of the spectrum, if fish cannot be seen moving it is often worth changing to a faster-sinking line or adjusting your indicator rig to depths of 10 feet or more to get results.

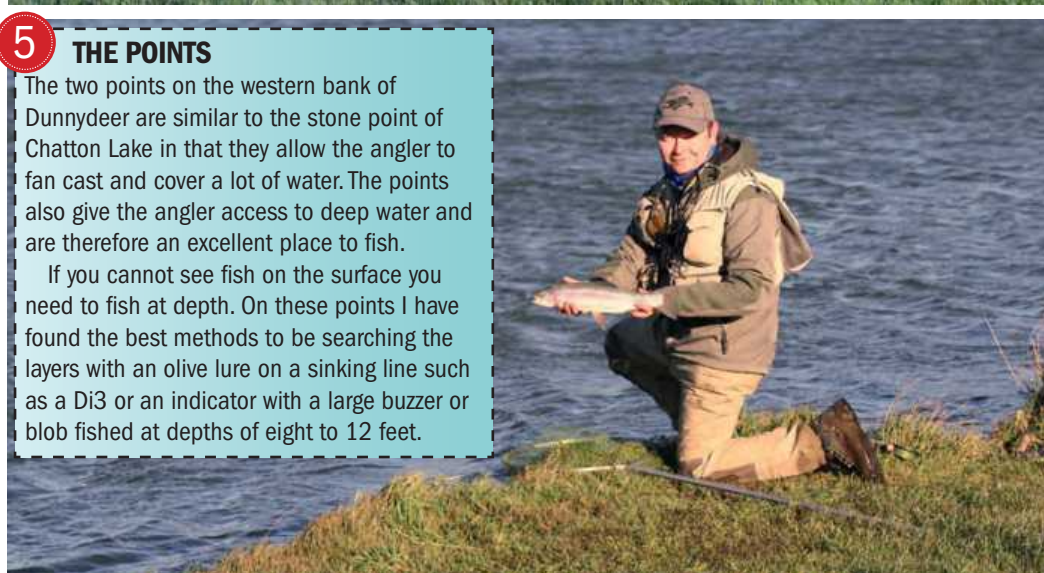
Although in comparison to the other lakes it is often difficult to find a method, results can be spectacular when you do unlock the secret. The fish in Dunnydeer fight extremely hard due to the clear water so it is always worth spending some of your day experimenting. I certainly find it to be the most satisfying lake to fish if you can get it right!



4 THE DUNNYDEER ARM

The arm on Dunnydeer Lake is the shallowest part of the water and is the best area to find fish feeding naturally if conditions are favourable. There is good weed growth in the corner and you will often find that it is the only part of the lake where fish will rise consistently.

I remember fishing small CDC dries in this part of the lake with great results when very few fish were being caught in other areas. As the water is clear, be prepared to fish fine copolymer and degrease regularly if you are finding it difficult to get takes from feeding fish.



5 THE POINTS

The two points on the western bank of Dunnydeer are similar to the stone point of Chatton Lake in that they allow the angler to fan cast and cover a lot of water. The points also give the angler access to deep water and are therefore an excellent place to fish.

If you cannot see fish on the surface you need to fish at depth. On these points I have found the best methods to be searching the layers with an olive lure on a sinking line such as a Di3 or an indicator with a large buzzer or blob fished at depths of eight to 12 feet.



6 THE NORTHEAST CORNER

The northeast corner of the lake can be a great place to fish, particularly if the wind is blowing into it. Recently stocked fish often shoal in here on a westerly wind and fishing can be exceptional, with a variety of lures or Flexi-Floss worms pulled on a fast intermediate line.

On other days fish will cruise on the edge of the drop-off and can be targeted with small nymphs, such as Crunchers, fished almost static on floating line.

7 NORTH CORNER

The northern corner of the main part of Ross Lake is a great place to start; it often produces fish, particularly if you can cast a relatively long line into the open water.

All methods work on the main part of Ross but I have found that dark flies are most effective so try black Tadpoles or Zonkers if you are fishing lures or black Pheasant Tails or Diawl Bachs if conditions are good.

Ross Lake

Ross tends to be the most coloured of the lakes at Chatton, particularly after rain. This can, however, be an advantage as the fish often feed better on bright days in comparison to the other lakes, which are often clearer and send the fish deep.

Ross Lake consists of a

large open area and one small bay and the fish tend to concentrate in either the main lake or the bay depending on the wind direction and water temperature. I have fished Ross Lake when the smaller bay is literally full of fish and on other occasions the fish seem to concentrate in the open water of the main lake.

During the warmer months the fish give away their location by feeding on the surface; however, if conditions are not so favourable it is best to keep on the move until you find the fish.


8 THE POINT

The point between the main lake and the bay is probably my favourite spot to start on Ross as it allows the angler to cast into both sides of the lake as required and you can fish it on almost any wind direction.

There's usually a crosswind on this peg so I like to fish a floating line with a long leader and let the wind drift the flies across the mouth of the bay.

9 THE BAY

The bay at the south end is sometimes full of fish, particularly if a warm wind is blowing into it. It is also shallower than the main lake and therefore tends to hold resident fish and a lot of natural fly life.

All methods work in this bay but a team of black buzzers with orange cheeks can be deadly. In cold winter conditions a lure retrieved slowly on an intermediate line or an indicator with an orange Squirmy fished close to the downwind bank can be deadly. Be prepared to move if you receive no interest within 30 minutes as this part of the lake tends to be all or nothing! 



Chatton Trout Fishery

Hosts of the 2014 International Bank FlyFishing Championship

Chatton Trout Fishery is owned and run by the Brown family and aims to provide the highest quality trout fly fishing in relaxed, peaceful and friendly surroundings. Our fishery consists of three lakes; Chatton Lake, Ross Lake, and Dunnydeer Lake, and is situated half a mile from the village of Chatton in picturesque north Northumberland.

• All three lakes are stocked twice a week • A rod licence is NOT required at Chatton Trout Fishery

Catch and keep.

2 hours - 1 fish limit - release 5 - £12
4 hours - 2 fish limit - release 7 - £17
5 hours - 3 fish limit - release 9 - £20
6 hours - 4 fish limit - release 11 - £24
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Second Place wins...

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If so, send us a great picture of your catch along with details on how you caught it, for your chance to win a Snowbee Challenge badge and prize.

Prizes will be awarded for the top three as chosen by the TFF panel. So get catching, get snapping, send your entries in and share your success with us.



Fish Of The Month

Gerald Green

The cooler weather has seen the big fish on the move and this huge 20lb rainbow from Northumberland's South Linden Fishery was the biggest this month. Bedlington angler Gerald Green spotted the fish fry feeding in the margins and after a few frustrating follows it nailed his Green Fritz lure. The fish took over 20 minutes to land and was safely returned to the water. This is Gerald's biggest fish and wins him the Snowbee Fish Of The Month for January.



2nd

Graeme Scott

Neilston angler Graeme Scott feels that Scotland's Harelaw Fishery is the best trout water in the country after catching this stunning 5lb 8oz fully finned brownie. The fish was taken on a size 14 olive Cruncher fished on a 8lb Fulling Mill leader and gave a great account of itself. This great-looking fish wins Graeme a Snowbee Easy View fly box and a Big-Water Brown Snowbee Challenge badge!



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Big-Water Brown
3lb-plus



FLYFISHER Snowbee
BIG-WATER RAINBOW

Big-Water Rainbow
4lb-plus



FLYFISHER Snowbee
SMALL-WATER BROWN

Small-Water Brown
5lb-plus



3rd

Neil Deakin

Neil Deakin had a day to remember at Toft Newton Fishery last month. Fishing from the boat using an intermediate line and a mixture of Blobs and a Black Snake, Neil tempted three huge fish in excess of 7lb with this 10lb 1oz fish being the biggest. The fish were fry feeding and more than keen to chase his lure patterns fished on a fast figure-of-eight retrieve. Neil said: "The fish were bow waving after the flies and I didn't think I was going to land the 10lb fish. This was the best day's sport I've ever had."



Mathew Henry

It seems that many of you have been out on the rivers in search of grayling. Hereford angler Mathew



Henry caught this 2lb 2oz grayling from the Lyepole beat of the River Lugg. The fish was caught on a woven Polish Gold Head Nymph on his first time Czech nymphing after reading a feature in TFF! Not a bad fish to start with, we're sure you'll agree!



Anthony Hooley

This fin-perfect wild brownie was caught and safely released before the end of the brown trout season at the South West Lakes Trust Wimbleball Reservoir. Anthony caught the fish while bank fishing in the Upton arm. He had previously caught two small wild brownies before this cracking fish took hold of his dry fly.

Snowbee Junior

Harry Forrester

We've had loads of entries in this month and it's great to see so many young anglers sharing their success. Picking a winner was extremely difficult but young Harry Forrester's 6lb tiger trout was the pick of the bunch. He caught the fish on a Christmas Tree lure just as he was lifting off to recast at Shropshire's Ellerdine Lakes. Harry has only been fishing for two months and now fishes regularly with his dad and brother, who have also been catching big fish from the venue. The beautiful tiger wins Harry a stash of Snowbee gear.



HOW TO ENTER

E-mail your entries to:

snowbeechallenge@dhp.co.uk

Enter online at:

www.totalflyfisher.com/
snowbee-challenge/entry-info

Via Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/totalflyfisher

Or drop us a line at:

Snowbee Challenge, TFF, DHP Ltd, 1 Whittle Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 8RQ.

Entry details must include:

- Name
- Age
- Address
- Telephone
- E-mail
- Category
- Species of fish
- Weight
- Date of capture
- Fly used
- Venue
- Tactics: *Provide as much detail as possible, to include tackle and method*
- Witness
- Don't forget that photo

1. Each entry must include a photograph of the catch, preferably of the angler holding the fish.
2. Each entry form must include the name and contact details of an independent witness.
3. Each badge can only be awarded once to any one person – there are six to aim for.
4. You must send in the form within two months of the capture of the fish.
5. Badge awards are subject to entries being approved by the TFF team. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
6. Photos cannot be returned.

Note: A water of less than 30 acres will be classed as a small water, and anything of 30 acres or above classed as a big water.

Snowbee Challenge



Small-Water Rainbow
7lb-plus



Salmon 10lb-plus
Sea Trout 4lb-plus



River Brown & Grayling
1lb 8oz-plus

POSTBAG

WE USED TO WORRY ABOUT THE POSTMAN IN THE RUN-UP TO CHRISTMAS, NOW IT'S E-MAIL SERVERS! THERE'S A PACK OF TURRALL FLIES FOR THE SENDER OF EVERY LETTER PUBLISHED!

No Humbug!

I have been fishing since I was five years old and I'm now 65 and still very active. For the past 20 years, most of the fishing I have done is game and I have been tying flies for 15 years. Now that I'm retired, frugality is a necessity if I want to fish as often as I like to.

We were out shopping the other day and with all the Christmas decorations

being put out in the shops a light went on in my head. There is so much cheap fly-tying material on the shelves and hanging on racks that I couldn't believe it. Open your eyes and there is so much colour and useful tying stuff, and the price is right.

By asking my hunting friends for feathers and fur and by using Christmas decorations, my fishing won't suffer. After all, the fish don't know I'm frugal.

Kevin Perry, St Austell,
via e-mail

STAR
LETTER



ED: You are absolutely correct, there's a forest of glittery stuff just waiting to be wound on to hooks and it is usually very inexpensive.

Try not to nick stuff from the tree, though, at least not until Twelfth Night. The kids won't appreciate it!

Not The Right Knot?

Since I started fly fishing, I had only used the uni knot to attach the fly to my leader because I have found this the most dependable one when using fluorocarbon.

However, this season I have switched to the Davy knot because it is so much easier to tie. Once tied, I test the knot. If it fails, I retie it. I have not had one fail while fishing with it.

Two weeks ago on my local club water, I managed to land this lump using a 6lb fluorocarbon tippet and a size 12 Cat's Whisker. I have no idea of the weight of the pike and could not fit it in the landing net. Luckily the fish had been hooked in the scissors, so was easily released.

Any doubts I may have had as to the reliability of the knot have now been dispelled.

Hugh Merritt (DCAC)

ED: There are a handful of 'best' knots and, in my experience, being able to tie one well blindfolded counts for everything. Find one that works and stick to it. That way you'll never be able to blame your knot for the one that got away!

Nice pike by the way!



Essential Reading

It was a lovely surprise to receive a generous collection of flies from The Essential Fly this week. May I say a big thank you. I often have a crack at the Total FlyFisher competitions but as soon as I've entered I forget about it and never expect to hear any more. Imagine my delight at getting a phone call asking me where to send my prize!

I have a subscription to TFF and like the articles on fly tying and the new ideas although I do not tie my own. As a consequence my fly collection is modest but growing and I dread to think how many I would accumulate if I succumbed to tying my own. These I have won are good flies and a welcome addition indeed because I still tend to lose a lot. Now I need another box!

On reflection, I often think that there are so many patterns around that we could be forgiven for thinking that it is not so much the colours or the finest, tiny details to offer the fish, but rather the way we fish them. A bit indecisive by nature, I take ages to choose the flies to use and usually drive home thinking: "Why

did I not try this or that?"

Thanks to you, I now have even more choice!

With sincere thanks and kind regards. Tight lines.
Joe C Baggott, Paignton, via e-mail

ED: Thanks for the kind feedback Joe. We had a great response to the Essential Fly competition in the October issue and the £50 worth of flies that you received represents a great arsenal for any fly angler. Just sorry we've added to your selection headaches!

I Want, I Want, I Want!

As a subscriber to the magazine for some years, I have enjoyed and found informative the many diverse articles and always look forward to Clark Colman's contributions. However, his recent article Battle Of The Toothpicks (November issue), which is a rod I have often had to use this year fishing the Cotswold Rivers, left me disappointed and frustrated because there were several casting techniques mentioned but their method of execution was never explained. While some readers will have extensive knowledge, this should never be assumed

because many buy the mag to improve their fishing techniques.

Incidentally, what were the leg protectors that Pete Scholes was wearing; I have never seen their type before?

And, at the risk of being picky, can we always have a diagram when a particular knot is suggested (Andy Smith's advice in Ask The Panel).

Keep up the good work.
David Robins, via e-mail

ED: I appreciate your frustration at the casting descriptions (or lack thereof) and will encourage our writers to expand on passing comments in future. I'm not a great fan of step-by-step casting illustrations on the page, though. I think they can confuse as much as inform. I much prefer professional tuition or, at the very least, video presentations of casting styles. I'll see what can be done on those counts.

On the subject of the leg protectors pictured in the same article, my understanding is that they are a pair of Guides Choice knee and ankle protectors (Google it). As for knot diagrams; it's a valid point. Below is a drawing of how to tie the Davy knot as used by Hugh Merritt.

Have Your Say...

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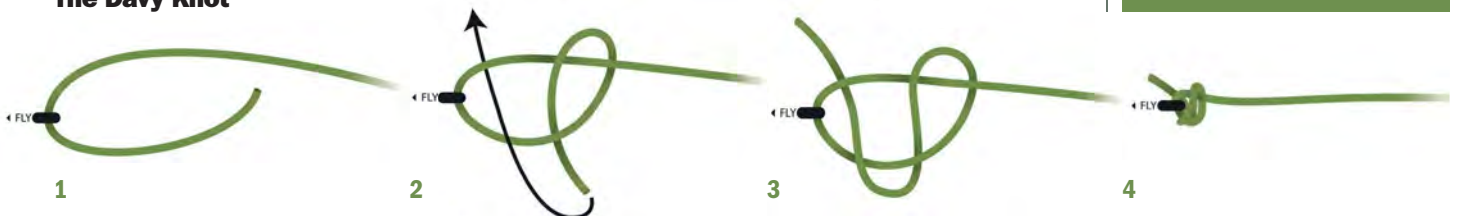
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COMING SOON...

Hunting From The Banks

With an unbelievably strong westerly wind howling across Warwickshire's Draycote Water, conditions are nigh-on impossible for Steve Cullen to tempt fish at his favourite time of the year.

My rod tip thumps over and dips deep into the now coloured water at the point of Dunn's Bay at Draycote Water, as a fighting-fit stockie – what's that doing here? – slams into my free-falling White Snake fly and takes off into more turbulent open water!

Feeling the hook holding well after the initial surge, I lift the rod high into the air and the rainbow's deep run is halted. However, if I thought that this was the end of the scrap I'm way short of the mark. I manage to gain several yards of line back, which isn't easy because I'm fighting the fish and the wind. I'm forced to flatten the rod and apply serious side strain to stop the trout heading into the wind. I don't want to

be face-on to that, thank you! I succeed in turning the fish before it tears off on another deep run and a final push for freedom. More pressure from my 'secret squirrel' Wychwood rod results in me quickly regaining control and I'm able to turn it away from the wind and bring it to the waiting net.

Back End

For me, there has always been something quite special and, dare I say it, insular, about hitting the banks at this time of the year. There's hardly anyone there so you can pretty much fish wherever you want. Try the places that no-one else does, you'll be pleasantly surprised. Plus, the fact that now, more than any other time, you have the opportunity to latch on to a big fish. Not huge but a proper one; one that you know the minute

Keeping the rod low when playing the fish reduces the chance of it coming off, particularly in windy conditions.



you pull the hook home, has been at large for some time. Even better is the fact that most times you will be fishing in shallow water. The fish will come right into the banks in the cold and hooking them in this knee-deep water will see them take off like a bonefish.

The Distant Past

It all started for me in the late 1980s, early 1990s, when a friend and I decided that we wanted to try our luck with these elusive back-end fish. The venue was a large stillwater, a popular boat and bank venue back then, called Portmore Loch, not too far from Peebles in Scotland. Each year after the season had finished, the owner liked to make sure that his fish stocks were depleted so that he could close the fishery for winter without too much fear of poaching. He would allow pretty much any method for anglers to catch their allotted amount for the price they'd paid for their ticket. As you can imagine, it was a popular day out for all manner of anglers.

We fished the venue regularly but in the warmer summer months, dry flies and nymphs were all you ever needed. However, we'd never fished it at the back end and we had never fished it from the bank.

This 11lb 3oz resident caught in the late 1980s from Scotland's Peebles Loch was the start of an addiction for catching huge end-of-season fish.



Fry-Feeding Explosion

Back then the fishing magazines seemed to be just cottoning on to the whole fry-feeding carry on. Minkies, Boobies and deer hair floating fry dominated the pages.

I wanted in on some of this action! So, before the trip to Portmore, my friend, Shane, and I had armed ourselves with some hefty flies to try and fool those fish that no doubt annihilated the loch's massive perch population. Articulated deer hair creations that looked like little perch, and Minkies, weighted and unweighted in a range of colours, were our creations! Do-or-die fishing!

It was a strange day. Everyone had parked down at the popular dam end, so we had an awful lot of water to go at – the place was over 100 acres. Most of the bank was pretty much inaccessible, due to trees, marsh and other

obstacles, but we dipped in here and there.

Game On

Right at the very top of the loch, where there's lots of weed and silt, we somehow managed to get out and get a few casts in. Shane, halfway through retrieving his large White Minkie, suddenly shouted: "I'm in!" Jeez, was he.

This fish jumped about four feet out of the water, showing its silver flanks. This was big, far bigger than any large-water fish that he'd had in the past. I quickly made my way over and started handing out advice, until Shane told me to shut up; he was in panic mode. Luckily for him, after the initial jump the fish just sulked out over deep water. With slow and steady pressure he worked it back to us and I slipped the net under it.

Keep a low profile and well back from the bank to start with. Those big resident fish are likely to be tight to the bankside early in the day.



Working the marginal weedbeds where the coots and tufted ducks are feeding is an ideal place to try. The big specimens won't be far away.





The Wychwood Bankman net doubles up nicely as a line tray. Position at a height and place where it catches the fly line once retrieved back.



I remember how massive it looked; what a fish, I'd never seen one like it. We'd had big fish before but they'd all been stockies. This was in a whole new league – Premier League to our Division Two!

I was over the moon for Shane but at the same time a little cut up that he'd caught it. No matter what you hear, us fishermen are a jealous bunch when it comes to big fish!

As with all fish that weekend, it had to be killed, so he administered the last rites.

Bigger And Better

For 15 minutes we fished the shore with the wind blowing into our faces. I saw a large commotion out in front of me and to my right. A fry feeder?

I took off my Minkie and attached, after cutting down my 12ft 10lb leader to eight feet, one of the colossal articulated fry patterns and somehow managed to cast it out there into the ripple. It's worth pointing out that Shane had given up – why not – and was watching from a high vantage point behind me.

He laughed: "There is no way a fish is coming up for THAT!"

The words were still in the air when a very large rainbow trout's head came up. Ever so slowly, the mouth opened over the fly and the fish vanished. I immediately lifted the rod tip, and the trout, still high in the water, began to thrash on the surface. Up until that point

in my fishing life I had never felt scared, never overawed or panicked about a situation. Right there and then, I was overawed, scared and I panicked!

The fish burst away from me with tremendous speed and power. My little Rimfly reel spun like it had never spun before – not much in the way of drag back then – and before I knew it I saw the backing knot rattle up through the rod rings. It stopped after what seemed like an age and I slowly started winding line back on the reel. I had the fly line back on the reel and the fish up near the surface doing that weird head shaking. It was about 30 feet away and it decided to go on a tour of the loch again – damn.

Slowly, ever so painfully slowly, I gained line. Shane was by my side to net it but sadly it never went in on the first attempt. The swearing was pitiful but it went in at the second time of asking. This thing was colossal, huge, magnificent. It looked like a salmon, everything you expect a wild rainbow to be, like Shane's but BIGGER!

It was time to head to the lodge.

To this day, that is the biggest, wild, okay I know we can't say wild, but as near as damn it wild rainbow, I've ever been able to land. It weighed in at 11lb 3oz and Shane's 8lb 12oz. I'm sure you'll agree, a ridiculous brace of fish.



Minkies, Zonkers, Floating Fry and Snakes are the typical patterns to try.

Hunting On Draycote

The knowledgeable Draycote bailiff, Tom Bird, offered some excellent advice on tactics and flies.

"There's not much fry feeding going on at the moment at the fishery. However, occasionally there's fish coming in to hit the small pocket of coarse fry that are shoaled up in the harbour near the lodge.

"They are not consistent and only seem to come into the shallows to feed every 20 minutes or so.

"But they can attack the fry very close to the banks, perhaps only a few feet out, anywhere on the reservoir; it's just a little hit and miss.

"A Suspender Minkie figure-of-eighted across the surface seems to be the favoured tactic, but in this wind I reckon there's very little chance of that working."

Because I can't fish the

harbour, I head up to the outlet up on the Farnborough bank, a good solid structure where you'd expect fry and fry feeders to be.

Getting there, though, I see that the water is coloured, something that I'm going to have to live with I guess.

Casting is not easy, with the wind gusting and shifting direction constantly. I tackle up with a 10ft 7-wt rod and a new Connect Series Hoverer fly line. The longer head section means I can punch it out in the wind.

I also use the new Bankman net; it's a handy little line tray too, so no tangles. I don't mess about; I go with a huge White Humungous Booby on eight feet of 10lb fluorocarbon leader.

The fly is sent out over the shallow water and I begin the retrieve. First cast and a bow wave comes barrelling up behind the fly. I feel a small



Reaching the clear water on certain banks might mean reversing your cast to get distance and for safety!

pull at the line, then it's gone.

I fish on and after about an hour I get another chance. I've changed to a long White Snake and I'm fishing it back slowly in the shallows when the trout takes. A welcome fish no doubt, but sadly it's a recent stockie.

Half an hour later I get another and decide on a move and search for a resident fish.

Looking For The Residents

I reach the bend in the land between Dunn's and Biggins Bay; nice shallow water, again coloured though, and the wind – wow – it's brutal. No matter, I'm here now. I'll just have to be careful and cast over my left shoulder. I'm never going to get the flies out far but the fish will be in the shallows. Sadly for

Bars of silver. End-of-season fish like these make fishing at this time of year well worth it.





me, I'm plagued with stockie rainbows, opposite ends of the reservoir and I'm getting stockies!

I head back up to the outlet. I know that this structure will hold big fish, I just have to try and get a method working.

When I get back up, I change again – a full floater, 14ft leader, two small Crunchers, black, so that they stand out, and I revert to the Big Booby on the point. Because the wind has settled and the temperature seemingly picked up, the action is immediate, if not conclusive, as I fish the water

still on the lookout for an easy mouthful.

I've not known too many fry-feeding trout that cannot be tempted into having a bit of a go at one of these flies.

Because there's no consistency, I have a long wait before they return for a bit more mayhem.

But return they do. The scattering fry announce their arrival as the tiny fish flee in all directions, jumping clear of the water as the voracious predators hammer into the shoal. With a slash of its tail, one executes a perfect handbrake turn before

“ I suddenly postpone my decision to move. There's a commotion by the deep water at the outlet as a pair of sizeable fish crash into the coarse fish fry. ”

to the Rainbow Corner side of the outlet.

The feeding fish are eager to chase the Booby, but not interested in taking the nymph when it's presented static. I let the stiff breeze swing the flies round enticingly but I get only one solid hook-up, again a recent rainbow.

It's a bit of a conundrum – do I stick it out and go through the numbers until a better one comes along or search elsewhere?

I suddenly postpone my decision to move. There's a commotion by the deep water at the outlet as a pair of sizeable fish crash into the coarse fry, grabbing my attention.

The feeding frenzy lasts for a few minutes and the water settles, but an uncertain calm descends around the area. I switch to a single-fly leader and my Popper Minkie, then cast into the calm.

No wind can affect my fly here and I sit it out well back from the edge. Those fish were big; I can only hope that one is

spinning round to mop up its stunned victims. I lift off and cast my fly into the melee. A serious brown trout rises from the murky depths, balances the fly on the point of its nose for what seems like an age and casually turns and disappears! Bugger!

As with a lot of fishing, hunting big fish at the back end is all about timing. Mine today was off. Sadly I'd been plagued with powerful winds and coloured water close in. Next time, there's always next time... **TFF**



FACT FILE: Draycote Water

The Fishing Lodge, Draycote Water, near Dunchurch, Rugby, Warwickshire CV23 8AB

Contact: 01788 812018

Email: lodge@flyfishdraycote.co.uk
www.flyfishdraycote.co.uk

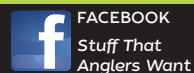


A recent stock fish is not what we were hoping for at this time of year. But there's always next time...

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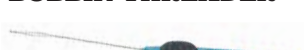
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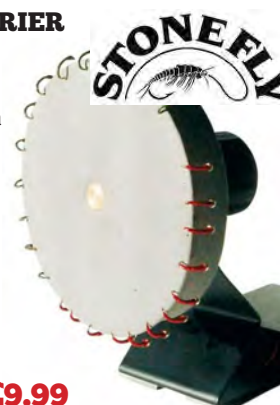
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OUR PRICE £9.99



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The Big Tie Off

with Turrall

Many of you will be just getting over the Great British Bake Off, so to keep you going over the next year we have put together this exciting new monthly tying competition. It gives readers the chance to get creative and win prizes from Turrall, including the chance to see your deadly design appear in tackle shops across the UK and beyond.

This is your opportunity to show us your fantastic creations and win some great prizes each month. So during these dark winter evenings, get behind the vice and get tying!

The Panel:



Andy Taylor: As TFF editor and a fly angler with international experience, Andy is always on the lookout for exciting new patterns and those with a competitive edge.



Dominic Garnett: The author of 'Flyfishing for Coarse Fish' has tied and designed flies for many applications, from predator catchers to terrestrials.



Simon Jefferies: As sales director at Turrall, Simon has scrutinised hundreds of new flies and has a keen eye for those that appeal to both fish and anglers.

Rules And Hints:

The panel will judge entries not just on tying skills and appearance, but the thinking and creativity behind each pattern. Above all, have some fun and get creative!

Give your fly a name, along with a few notes on the pattern, the materials and hook used. Is it for a particular water or fishing scenario? You can also include any information on design, materials, or any great catches you have made on it.

One entry per reader each month. Please send one fly only in a light protective container such as a hook box.

Entries will be judged on a monthly basis, with the best patterns appearing in future issues. You do not have to enter every month to be in with a chance of the grand prize at the end of the year.

This competition is open to keen fly tyers of all ages and abilities. However, you must be an amateur and not a professional tyer and the overall winning entry for 2016 will not receive a commission rate.

Flies must be tied solely by the entrant.

There are no cash alternatives to any prizes.

Entries are sent at the owners risk. Confirmation of delivery is not possible.

*The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



THIS MONTH: Create A Stillwater Lure

As we enter the coldest part of the fly fishing season, natural fly hatches can be scant and lure patterns come to the fore on small stillwaters across the UK. Close-copy imitation rarely comes into the equation with these flies, which are designed to attract, provoke and appeal to the aggressive streak of trout.

Traditionalists might scoff, but flies bursting with movement, colour and flash provide smash takes and welcome action on the dourst of winter days. Every stillwater angler has their favourite lures. Creating one from scratch is not rocket science and with hook sizes



typically in the 6 to 10 range, they needn't be fiddly to tie. That said, our judges are looking for neat ties with plenty of attraction and perhaps a twist or two.

Lure Materials

The choice of materials is entirely yours for this round, but staples tend to be those that provide plenty of life and presence. Marabou is perhaps the classic here, which gives any fly movement and is available in many colours. That said, you could also go natural. Zonker strips add a lovely wiggle and add an extra pulse, or you could use any natural, mobile hair to create something more old school. Colour is up to

METZ
Feathers

[illegible]

Finally, you could also feature a weighted head of some kind in the form of a bead, cone, chain or dumbbell eyes. Not only do these add weight to get down to the fish, but also add an extra dash of colour. Happy tying!

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email address

Age if under 18

Fly Name

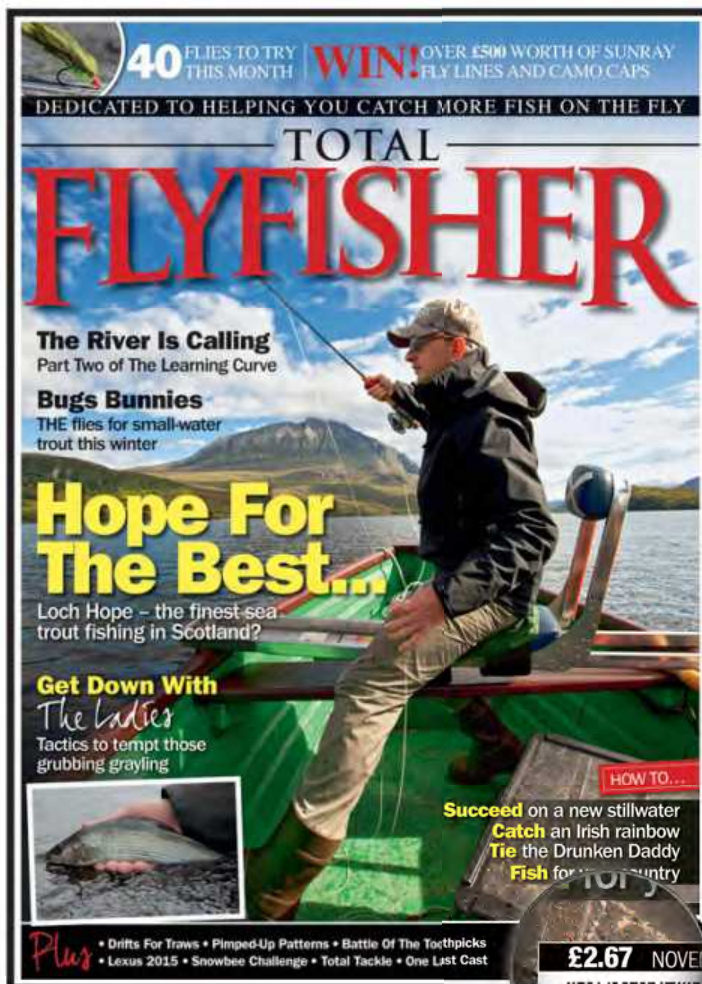
Fly Description

Continue on a separate sheet of paper

Send your entry to... Turrall Tie Off, Total FlyFisher, 1 Whittle Close,
Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 8RO



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Greys

GR70 Travel Rod (Single-Handed)

The GR70 single-handed travel rod from Greys comes in two models, a 9ft 5-wt and a 9ft 6in 7-wt. These six-piece rods come in a sectioned Cordura rod tube that should comfortably fit into any travel bag (56cm long for the 5-wt).

These fast-actioned rods have the ability to punch out a good line with little effort. As with the range of GR70 rods, these have a dark gunmetal-grey finish, AAA high-class cork handle, rod ID line-up marks, a smart skeletal-

design reel seat and is covered by the Greys warranty.

The 5-wt has a reverse half-wells handle, the 7-wt has a full-wells handle and fighting butt. Two great rods ideal for those who like to travel.



Distributor: 01665 602771

RRP: £239.99 for the 9ft 5-wt; £259.99 for the 9ft 6in 7-wt

www.greysfishing.com

Bann Valley Flies

Tungsten Nymphs

Bann Valley Flies is an Ireland-based fly company that manufactures high-quality and innovative flies. Its range of tungsten nymphs and jigs are tied on Hanak Competition hooks using top-quality materials.

These flies are tied to a high standard and cover the most popular colour ranges and profiles used today for grayling and trout. There is a range of barbless patterns to select from that are suitable for all rivers this winter. There's no doubt that these beauties will account for some grayling before March.

Available from Bann Valley stockists.

Contact: info@bannvalley.com

RRP: £1.20

www.bannvalley.com

Veniard

Multi-Window Concertina Fly Box

These lightweight plastic concertina fly boxes caught my eye at the recent Tackle & Guns Trade Show. Holding plenty of flies and in four colours – orange, light green, grey and tan – they are ideal for those who like to separate their buzzers from dries, lures and nymphs. They will easily fit into your waistcoat and significantly reduce the weight on your shoulders if, like me, you carry five or six fly boxes in your jacket.

These neat boxes float and are secured via a black band, making access easy. Great budget fly boxes available from Veniard stockists.

Distributor: 020 8684 2288

RRP: £4

www.veniard.com



Richard Wheatley Grayling Fly Box

This limited edition black aluminium fly box would make a nice Christmas gift for those who like to fish for the lady of the stream. It has a laser-engraved grayling on the lid, which was designed by Charles Jardine.

The 6in box has a choice of either ripple or flat foam storage. Replacement foam pads can be bought separately if required. For those of you who like collector's items or limited edition boxes, this pictorial fly box from the Wheatley range could be for you.



Distributor: 01460 55369

RRP: £56

www.richardwheatley.com



Ian's Flies Lures

With winter upon us, many of us reach for our lure box to try and catch those stillwater trout. Now's the time to check your boxes and restock with those killing patterns. Ian's Flies has a huge range of lures to tempt both the angler and the trout.

There's no doubt that black flies work well in cold conditions and patterns such as the Black Vibrating Tadpole, Viva Cat and Ally McCoist will definitely take their fair share of trout. Add the Pink Panther and some Minkie and Zonker patterns and you have a box that you can rely on to put a few fish on the bank this winter.

These lures are well tied and so far the Pink Panther and Ally McCoist have worked well for me on my local stillwaters. These are good-quality flies, nicely tied and a great price.

Contact: 01324 558623

RRP: 45p to 75p each

www.iansflies.com



Wychwood Connect Series Fly Lines

New from Wychwood is an exciting array of fly lines in its Connect Series that covers the modern-day angler's needs. These lines tick the boxes for distance casting, supreme fly presentation and ultimate take detection.

They feature longer and heavier front tapers – which allows for tighter loops and extra distance – the slick coating offers better presentation and the braided nylon core offers sensitivity and plenty of give to ensure

those smash takes are avoided.

Each line comes with a number of logos that show its properties easily and clearly, explaining which conditions they should be used in. I've already tried the Feather Down Floater and Rocket Floater and both sail through the rod rings with ease. I can't wait to test all the lines in this series. An interesting set at a penny under £30 per line.



Distributor: 01908 442949

RRP: £29.99

www.wychwood-game.co.uk



Snowbee Geo Nano Fly Rod 10ft 3wt/ 10ft 4wt

Snowbee has brought two new river rods to its Geo Nano Technology range, which is perfect for those who fancy sampling grayling fishing this winter. I've been using the 10ft 3-wt over the last three months and found it to be a great 'nymphing' rod.

It's a light, soft-action rod that handles well when fishing at long range with French leaders and also close in when trundling heavy tungsten flies. The soft action means you can feel every twist and turn from the fish once hooked. I've also used it for dry-fly work, and while I do prefer something shorter for this

type of fishing, I found very little difference in fly presentation and my hook-up ratio.

The rod has a gunmetal grey finish, comes in a matching grey cotton rod bag and triangular Cordura rod tube with the Snowbee Original Purchaser Lifetime Guarantee. I like this rod, it's performed well for me so far, and it's one I shall continue to use throughout the remainder of the grayling season!

Distributor: 01752 334933

RRP: £379

www.snowbee.co.uk

Partridge Predator Hooks

New to Partridge is a range of predator hooks to suit a range of fly patterns. The Extreme Predator Jig 45 is exactly what it says – a jig hook in sizes 3/0 to 7/0 with a 45-degree down-eye jig bend. This is a heavy-wire, micro-barbed hook and is ideal for pike flies. These black nickel hooks come in packs of 10.

The Universal Predator X Jig 60 is a wide-gape, Aberdeen-style, micro-barbed jig hook with a 60-degree down bend. It comes in sizes 2/0 to 10/0 with 10 hooks per pack, apart from the 10/0 where there are six in the pack. Again these are designed with all predator species in mind.

Finally, the Extreme Predator Lock Bend X is based on the Absolute Predator hook. Like the others it's a heavy-wire, micro-barbed hook with a forged bend. It comes in two sizes, 4/0 and 5/0, in packs of 10. These are some serious hooks, which I'm looking forward to using this winter.

Distributor: 01963 31623

RRP: £4.50 to £9

www.partridge-of-redditch.co.uk



Semperfli Predator Fibres

As winter kicks in, many of us switch to trying for predator species such as pike, perch and zander on the fly. Semperfli's Predator Fibres is the ideal material to create those baitfish patterns that these fish love.

Coming in vast array of colours, with an 18in strand in each packet, there is a colour and plenty of material to cover both large and small baitfish patterns. The fibres are fully hydrophobic, which means they shed water when cast. This makes casting such flies a little easier and will give your predator flies plenty of kick and movement.

Predator Fibres material is easy to use and has uses within other parts of fly tying, such as winging materials for salmon flies.

Distributor: 01757 333001

RRP: £4.99

www.semperfli.net



WIN!

COMPETITION



The Lexa range combines Hywel Morgan's fish-catching expertise with the Daiwa engineers' know-how and the craftsmanship that only a UK base can boast. The result is a collection of stunning, Scottish-built rods covering all disciplines of fly fishing.

We have three on offer and each of our winners gets to choose from any of the 10 trout models. There's a pair of River models, two Nymph rods with optional 12in extension joints, five dedicated stillwater tools and an 11ft 3in Switch model.

All the rods in the range are built on blanks made with Daiwa's exclusive 'High Volume Fibre' carbon and feature four-joint construction

(plus a 12in intermediate section on the Nymph rods) to ensure they pack away into a compact tube for transportation. The snake guides are all of stainless with the stripper guides lined with Alconite – a high-performance grade of aluminium oxide. They also boast an original owner lifetime guarantee.

Just check out the full specs here or visit www.daiwasports.co.uk for further details.

We raved about them in the April issue, now this is your chance to win one!

What are you waiting for? You could win a rod for the price of a stamp or a phone call.

Just answer a simple qualifying question correctly and cross your fingers!

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LXRSF905-AU	River Special	9ft	3.3	5	4	£225.00
LXNSF08093-AU	Nymph Special	8ft/9ft	3.2	3	4+1	£215.00
LXNSF091034-AU	Nymph Special	9ft/10ft	3.5	3/4	4+1	£235.00
LXSWF966-AU	Stillwater Special	9ft 6in	3.9	6	4	£235.00
LXSWF967-AU	Stillwater Special	9ft 6in	3.9	7	4	£235.00
LXSWF968-AU	Stillwater Special	9ft 6in	3.9	8	4	£235.00
LXSWF1007-AU	Stillwater Special	10ft	4.0	7	4	£245.00
LXSWF1008-AU	Stillwater Special	10ft	4.0	8	4	£245.00
LXSWF11378-AU	Switch Rod	11ft 3in	6.5	7/8	4	£275.00

WWW.DAIWASPORTS.CO.UK

For the chance of winning one of these terrific rods, simply call this number

0901 293 2305

and correctly answer this question:

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A WISHAW **B** AIRDRIE **C** BLANTYRE

Alternatively, You can send your answer on a postcard to: Daiwa Lexa Competition, Total FlyFisher, 1 Whittle Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 8RQ.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received by noon on January 13th, 2016

Please obtain permission from whoever pays your phone bill before entering. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

The promoter may wish to contact you after the competition deadline and we may contact you with the latest news, updates and relevant offers from Total FlyFisher. If you do not wish to receive details by e-mail or post direct from selected third parties, please indicate that preference on any postal entry.

ENTRIES MUST REACH US BY JANUARY 13TH

There are many benefits of fishing from a float tube for pike. Being able to quietly access areas where they lie is one...

**FACT FILE:****About the author:**

Laurent Guillermin is a professional reporter and photographer. His images and articles have appeared in a great number of fishing magazines and he is in the fortunate position of travelling the world to search out some new amazing destinations to write and photograph.

Laurent knows all about fly fishing for trout, grayling, pike, carp, bass, bonefish and permit. He's also considered a sight fishing expert for big wild brown where accuracy and delicate presentation are the keys of success.

"Every take is a learning, every trip is an adventure... the adventure is sometimes close to our home!"

Contact: lgfishing@orange.fr



Pike On The Tube

Destination angler and expert sight fisher Laurent Guillermin highlights the benefits of catching pike on the fly... from a float tube!

When the trees are adorned with their finest yellow-orange colours, autumn and winter remind us that it is time to fly fish for pike. What is more exciting than casting a big fly to a pike chasing a school of baitfish on a cool morning? Float tubing in lakes and large rivers is an excellent way for those who want to live magical moments!

Let's Float Together...

Fly fishing lakes for pike can be done successfully in several different ways but one good method is using a float tube, or belly boat, and there are many advantages to using one over a regular boat.

It allows you to fish water that doesn't get a lot of pressure, getting back into smaller, forgotten lakes that don't have any boat ramps or roads, or for fishing water where boats aren't allowed. Fly fishing for pike is all about picking off the fish where they lie, and the float tube has all the benefits!

If you fish from the bank, you can be sure the feeding fish always seem to be several yards further out than your furthest cast on your best day. A belly boat is very discreet

and allows you to come very close to the fish without spooking it. This approach avoids the long casts that tire fisherman after a few hours.

Acquiring a float-tube remains very affordable, and storage and transport in your car is convenient and fast. There are different shapes and types of float tube but my number-one model comes from the French manufacturer Mouches de Charette and it is called the Boat Tube. It looks like a pontoon-style float boat but it's not – these are heavier than the standard belly boat

without taking up very much room – good news for the waders, rods and all the stuff we need...

A Take On The First Cast!

In my experience, unlike trout, the pike is a fish that is not that difficult to catch. Pike can take your fly on the first cast if you fish it at the right place! I recommend, especially if it is a first attempt, to concentrate your fishing on very specific sectors instead of covering a large amount of water. I have also noticed that the best times for fly fishing are the days when a moderate wind moves the surface and the cold begins

to settle. Check the barometer is low enough for successful fishing.

There is always a

nice pike to take your fly, just sheltered by a current along a submerged tree against large boulders or along the reed beds that will slowly disappear with the cold temperatures. The pike does not hunt its prey like other predators, such as perch or zander; he waits motionless in his place for a roach or a rudd to come close enough! Of course, the right spots evolve naturally depending on the concentrations of fish on which he feeds.

Autumn and winter are

“The pike does not hunt its prey like other predators; he waits motionless for a roach or rudd to come close enough!”

and they take up more space when they are not inflated. The Boat Tube, despite its impressive size, is relatively compact and is equipped with oars to facilitate travel over long distances. On the water it is very easy to manoeuvre even with strong winds and allows fishing in almost all conditions.

I was immediately seduced by this very well thought out tube that remains easy to use and lightweight! You can store it in the back of your car



The Boat Tube from Mouches de Charette:

French manufacturer Mouches de Charette offers a very original product, designed by fishermen for fishermen. The two large PVC floats are tapered at the ends to aid movement forward and backwards with the oars and fins. They are also fitted with pins that increase the overall stability and minimise wind resistance.

The Boat Tube provides a rigid foundation of a good seat to ensure maximum stability and comfort for the angler. Large pockets are completely removable.

I had the chance to test the first prototype and what it provides to the angler is really fantastic. It is a product that will become essential for anglers eager for space and freedom!

Length: 220cm

Width: 110cm

Weight: 13kg



Les Mouches de Charette

The Guillets, 01310 Montracol, France

Tel: 00 33 (0)4 74 24 22 73

E-mail: info@mouchesdecharette.com

www.mouchesdecharette.com

a boon for fly fishermen because white fish congregate in certain areas where they slow their biological activity. Predators such as pike follow these schools and take advantage of the situation to focus their attacks. On a large, lazy river, I look for schools of bleak or dace because there's always a pike lurking around! Your fly has to sink slowly, pass through the crevices of the bottom and the edges of the current, where the predator is on the lookout. Sometimes there is no visible sign of activity near the surface but these concentrations of fish are always excellent to give a try.

Just recently I caught a nice pike and big perch by obstinately casting around a large concentration of rudd. The next day, in the same place, I caught two pike, of 80 and 90 centimetres, on a large orange fly! Never ignore a gathering of forage fish.

Sometimes a pike will hold completely still, relying on its incredible ambushing skills to devour a tasty meal. When fly fishing pools, I concentrate my efforts on the edges,

retrieving my streamer very slowly. Sometimes the attack occurs even on the descent of the fly and the line tightens suddenly, like a clothesline! In large lakes the fish can be anywhere, but try to focus on certain areas, such as rocks, boulders, water inlets that concentrate small fish, and reed beds!

Sight Fishing For Toothy Critters...

With the exception of catfish, the pike is the undisputed master of our lakes and large waters. Fly fishing for pike is often 'in competition' with various other techniques and it is true that good results are sometimes difficult to obtain. But believe me when I say that sight fly fishing is the best method to catch a big fish, especially from a float tube!

In some gin-clear waters, it is possible to focus on very large specimens, given the incredible mobility of the belly boat. Success will therefore depend largely on our ability to assess and understand the pike's predation on baitfish!



According to my experience in many different places in Europe, it is very rare that a big pike of one metre moves for a 5cm streamer! Very large flies that move the water when you retrieve will catch the biggest

As the cold weather kicks in, slow the retrieve down. High-speed flies won't work in the depths of winter.





Orange flies work well where rudd are the main food source.

ones! A big, voluminous and flashy fly is what you need on your tippet leader!

Those big flies must stay fairly easy to cast, though, in spite of the amount of material tied on the big hook! Most pike flies are tied on large single hooks. My choice ranges from 6/0 to 9/0, nothing smaller.

To aid unhooking, use barbless hooks or debarb the hook first. You could eradicate barbs by crushing them down with pliers. Some flies have a weed guard that can minimise the chance of snagging up in weedy water. I know that many saltwater fly patterns will catch pike but it is best avoiding stainless-steel hooks, as these won't rot if you lose them in the fish.

Anglers who hunt big pike in gin-clear water should look for maximum efficiency with a minimum of casting. It is often in this way that we manage to capture large pike on the fly, with a good dose of adrenaline a bonus. In fact, the big pike are real fighters and it is often difficult to catch these formidable opponents. Their mouths, lined with teeth, are always a problem and big hooks sometimes struggle to take hold. Some places, especially rivers with submerged tree roots and branches, give a lot of trouble to the most talented among us, but the game is definitely worth the candle, as taking a fish for more than 20lb is a real satisfaction for a fly fisherman!

The angler should always keep in mind that baitfish behaviour largely determines the appetite of the pike. Some scientists have noted that in Lake Geneva, evolution of the schools of perch was directly correlated with the status of big pike populations. Fly fishing for pike demands the use of robust rods to be able to cast the heavy fly lines required to present large flies. A 9ft rod designed to cast

something from 8 to 10-wt fly lines may also possess adequate backbone to restrain large fish. These types of rod will be far better to return a big pike to the water quickly, much more quickly than fish that are played to a standstill on lightweight tackle.

Casting large flies is made a lot easier by the use of heavy lines, and in particular pike-taper fly lines with an exaggerated weight-forward profile. Casting speed must also be slowed down to allow the fly and leader to extend properly.

Whatever fly line you choose it is vital to make sure that your fishing reel can hold a minimum of 100 metres of excellent quality backing. Pike are capable of making short but very fast runs! The action of fishing for pike should always be very slow, especially at this time of year in cold waters. A large, mobile streamer slowly retrieved always takes more than another swimming at high speed.

Since I started using bigger flies, the most notable result has been the larger size of the pike I have caught. Orange, pink and white are still the most popular colours in my pike flies. Many of the patterns I use nowadays are 15 to 20 centimetres in length. **TF**



Pike flies tied on single size 6/0 to 9/0 hooks will make unhooking the fish easier.

Large flies = large pike!



Laurent's fly fishing tackle for pike:

Rods: JMC SPCX Speciale Camassier and JMC Triumph SPC Speciale Camassier

Reels: Airflo VLite 7/9 and Orvis Hydros 4

Line: Airflo Bass/Musky line WF9

Leaders: Airflo Titanium and Predator Polyleader





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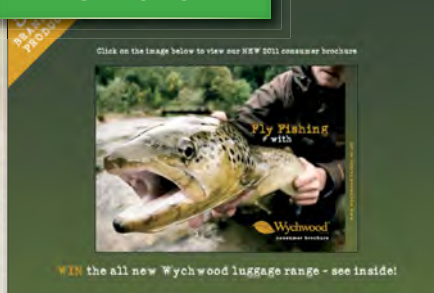
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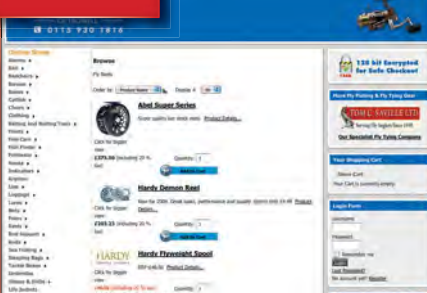
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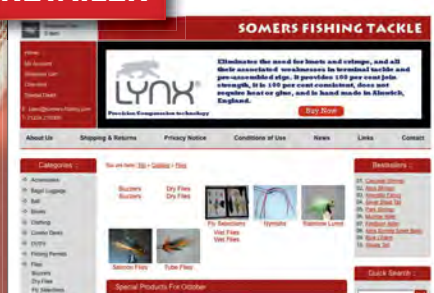
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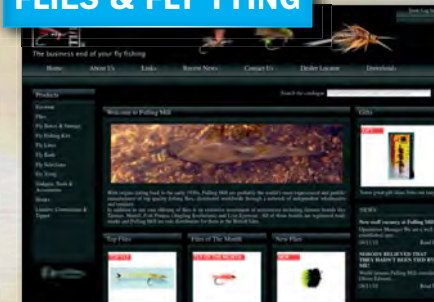
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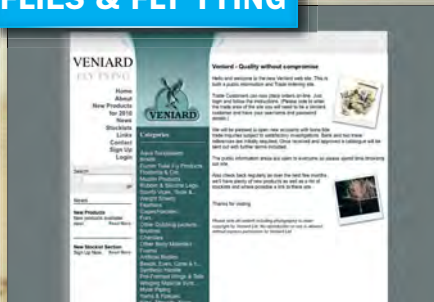
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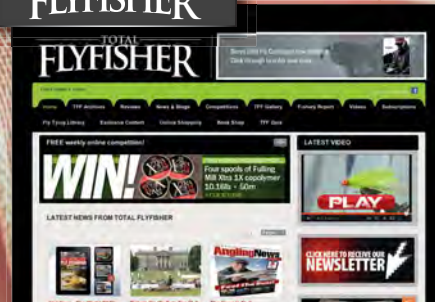
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Kieron Jenkins

Age: 23 **Occupation:** Digital marketing manager at Fulling Mill
Lives: South Wales



Welsh international angler and our man behind Pimped-Up Patterns, Kieron Jenkins shares his thoughts and experiences on all things fly fishing. It all started when he was seven...

How long have you been fishing for?

I was lucky enough to have started fly fishing when I was just seven, and competing from the age of eight!

How did you get into fly fishing?

My dad, Paul Jenkins, aka Bushy, was always big into competition fishing. Shortly after I started fly fishing I would follow him around the competition scene, from the Benson & Hedges to internationals.

First place you fly fished?

Claerwen Reservoir – a wild brown trout water nestled high in the hills, a wonderful place to start fly fishing.

First fish you caught on a fly?

A brown trout about six inches long, caught on one of my first-ever tied flies, a Black and Peacock Spider!

Favourite fly fishing method?

It has to be dry flies. Fooling a fish into eating something off the surface is something else and to visually see the take is what's most appealing.

Favourite three pieces of fly fishing tackle?

My beloved 10ft 5# GLX, a beautiful rod for bank and boat fishing; my Nautilus FWX 3/4 reel – I know reels just hold the fly line, but it's a river reel that is ALWAYS used; Tiemco Dry Magic, the ultimate in fly floatant. My day is ruined if I forget this.

Top fly for 2015?

The Wrapped Minkie Fry featured in Pimped-Up Patterns in the December issue. This has been a great pattern, especially during the latter months on Chew, where it accounted for many resident fish, including a 7lb brown.

Team of flies to stake your life on?

Cat Booby, plain Diawl Bach, black Traffic-Light Buzzer.

All three flies are proven fish catchers. When have you come off

the water and heard anglers saying they hadn't caught when they put the Cat on?

Most memorable fish on fly?

There are literally so many! The most memorable has to be a 63cm grayling from one of the rivers in Slovakia in 2010. Unfortunately it was during a competition and I didn't get a picture!

Of late, it has to be one of the big browns in our South Walian rivers.

Angling heroes?

Russell Owen, Anthony Cartwright and Gareth Jones – hands down. I've learnt a lot from these three over the years and I am lucky enough to fish with two of them in my team. Every so often they produce a result that makes you think: "Yeah, they're good."

Do you do other types of fishing?

Yes. I often target bass with lures from the shore, perch and pike and some winter sea fishing.

Your dream fishing destination?

At the moment it has to be Cuba in search of bonefish, tarpon and permit. It will come true soon, I'm sure!

Most embarrassing angling experience?

Probably back in the youth international at Brenig. I was drawn with Scarlett Hodges (who is a great angler) and she beat me! I can take getting beaten in any match, but when there are 13 other youth teammates taking the mick out of you for being beaten by a girl it can become quite embarrassing!

The Wrapped Minkie Fry

Hook: Fulling Mill Barbless Streamer size 8 **Thread:** Veevus White PB2 140 (Funky Fly Tying) **Underbody:** 10 turns of large lead wire **Flash:** 10 Strand Silver Micro Flashabou **Body:** White Mink Wrapped Wound **Overwing:** Brown Mink **Eyes:** Orange/Silver 4mm Tab Eyes (Funky Fly Tying) **Finish:** Bug-Bond



Best venue?

Rutland has to be my favourite venue. I always try to get a dozen or so boats there a year. When the arms are on fire there is no beating it.

What things wind you up the most in fly fishing?

Selfish anglers. I have no greater pleasure than helping an angler out with flies/methods/fish location – competitions are different – but you often see anglers who need help but don't take it.

What changes would you like to see in fly fishing locally and within the UK?

I know it's a rough subject, but day-ticket prices for young anglers. Many of the waters around me are extremely expensive, even for working folk, let alone children/parents, especially those whose parents fish as well!

Do you tie your own flies?

Yes, I tie all my own flies.

International pedigree?

Nine youth international caps – Brown Bowl – Llandegfedd. One senior international cap.

Five river international caps – Brown Bowl – Ireland. Two Commonwealth caps. Currently holds the title for most fish caught in one (1½-hour) session. Four World caps – best position, 4th in Italy.


How can we encourage new anglers into fly fishing?

I tend to take out any of my friends when I can if they show an interest in fishing. I also get to know some of the newbies to angling around my neck of the woods and spend time with them. They've always been grateful for the help and often start competing.



A huge River Taff brown taken at the end of last season.

Where do you see fly fishing being at in 2030?

From a competitive angler's aspect, I see there being a lot less competition angling. Many of the anglers I know are slowly dwindling away from competitions. Unless there's a load of money injected into the fly fishing world I can't see many of the competitions surviving the next few years, let alone until 2030! 



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Tying Tips

Matchman Flies' Carl Nixon shares his top tying tips to help you create those perfect patterns. This month he looks at booby eyes and buzzer cheeks.

Booby Eyes

Boobies – some people like tying them, some don't, but it shouldn't be something to avoid.

Over the years I've tried numerous ways to attain the perfect, balanced shape and recently I've been using a rotary multi-tool with the oxide grinding bit attached – the concave end is perfect for shaping eyes in seconds! There's no need to purchase brand-named items either; save yourself the hassle and grab a kit for around £20.

I've also found tying the eyes on last the neatest way to finish a fly, especially with wings. The wing sits neatly behind the eyes without that nasty-looking gap. If you've ever used Boobies you'll have found that unless the eyes aren't rounded and balanced somewhat, then your leader is forever twisting. Spend a little time shaping your eyes before you tie them in and I think you will find that the end results will reduce the twisting and increase your tying satisfaction.



The tools required:

- Rotary multi-tool with aluminium oxide grinding bit
- Section of extendable metal magnet
- Fine-pointed scissors.



Complete the fly as required, in this case a UV Straggles Cat Booby. For creating a neat head, try not to use 15 turns of thread when four or five will do.



Shape your 5mm drilled foam tube by inserting each end into the concave end of the grinding bit. Once you're happy with the shape, add the foam to your thread with an overhand loop, keeping the eyes central.



Keep the thread tensioned and complete four or five turns; the eyes will end up on top of the shank.



Rotate the foam away from you and make several over and under turns between the eyes. Make sure the tension is even and the thread is central to keep the eyes at right angles to the shank.



With the thread in front of the eyes, whip finish and add a drop of superglue to the underside of the eyes to secure them and the head of the fly.



Buzzer Cheeks

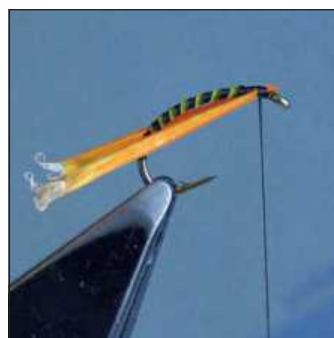
Buzzer cheeks, tied in proportion will give a fly that balanced look. Aim for approximately a fifth of the total length for the thorax area.

Cheeks don't always have to be traditional goose biots either; holographic tinsel, twisted dubbing, Flexi-Floss/ Spanflex, T-shirt paint and all manner of food product wrappers can be used. Toffee Crisp and Walkers chicken crisp packets are a firm favourite of mine just now.

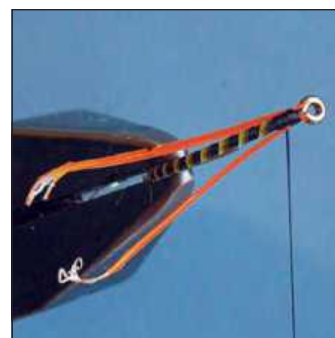
Varnishing the fly is just as important! Five to six coats of well-applied varnish make your buzzer stand out from the crowd.



Complete your buzzer to this stage and create a slight profile at the thorax using thread layers – two to three will be enough.



Take two goose biots, catching them in on either side of the thorax, angled downwards towards the abdomen. Trim away the finer points of the biot at the eye.



Note how the biots curve away from the shank. This is essential as the tiny barbules on the biots lie in the same direction and will be easier to tie in and varnish. Take the thorax to approximately a fifth of the length of the fly to keep it in proportion.



Bring the biots up and over the thorax, catching in with no more than two to three turns of thread.



Keeping the thread tight, bring the goose biot backwards and pull sharply. This creates a far neater and closer finish to the biot cheek than cutting.



Note how the biot's upper edges meet at the top of the thorax. Finishing this way gives the angled cheek finish.



The finished buzzer. Use a two or three-turn whip finish and the fly is ready for varnishing.

Archie's Antiques Roadshow

Clark Colman uses some treasured fly fishing mementos to catch grayling for a much-missed friend on an evocative trip down memory lane...

My friend Archie Rankin and I went back a long way. I'd known this wise, benevolent country doctor and former Royal Army Medical Corps captain since boyhood, and our paths continued to cross after his retirement via the Aspatria Angling Club, which (like his GP father before him), Archie served faithfully as president for many years. Through the club, I held a season ticket on the middle reaches of the River Ellen in northwest Cumbria, which chuckles and meanders along between the Solway Firth and the edge of the Lake District National Park.

I was thrilled when Dr Rankin honoured me with vice-chairmanship of Aspatria Anglers in 2006. As a young pretender among older, more experienced hands, Archie's trust and guidance was never far away – especially when I was tasked with organising

and overseeing the club's trickle-stocking policy following major pollution incidents.

Thereafter, the many demands of eight years in teaching meant that I saw much less of the good doctor; however, I always looked forward to chatting over the phone and visiting whenever I could. Our meetings always

knew this wouldn't have been due to any neglect on Archie's part – and couldn't help but laugh when he confessed that his beloved wife and fellow doctor Elaine had ordered him to go fishing instead of mithering her during labour!

An Unexpected Legacy

It was a cold and wet evening in March 2013 when Archie's

daughter Lizzie telephoned with the news that the old doctor had passed away at the age of 85. He'd been

ill for a while, but was making good strides forward when I'd last seen him, so it was with a difficult mixture of surprise, profound sadness and happy memories that I attended Archie's funeral in Aspatria.

It seemed fitting to bid my friend farewell on March 15th – the first day of the River Ellen's wild trout season. However, despite a lovely, uplifting service at St Kentigern's Church, only a stone's throw from the river,

“I'd sit enraptured as, in his soft Scots accent, my friend told of the good sport he'd enjoyed on the river over the years.”

took place over good beer or whisky in the comfy, book-lined sitting room of Archie's house, tucked away behind the old surgery and overlooking the Ellen valley.

I'd sit enraptured as, in his soft Scots accent, my friend told of the good sport he'd enjoyed on the river over the years – including, he confided, during those anxious few hours before the birth of his son Robert! A loving husband and family man to the core, I

**ANGLER PROFILE:**

Clark Colman is the Fly Fishing Specialist at Orvis UK's Harrogate store, and also runs EDIP FlyFishing – a popular guiding service operating nationwide.

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TACTICS



Fifty years on and Archie's Hardy rod and reel take their first grayling!



The adjustable sheep's wool indicator. Forgotten in this day and age but more than capable of supporting a single 2.8mm beaded fly.



The tail of the pool is a typical grayling haunt...

“Its always risky using cane rods that haven't been flexed for a long while, but there were a couple at least that seemed up to the task.”

I came away with the feeling that I hadn't quite said my goodbyes properly. Help was soon at hand, however – and in a way it came from Archie himself.

A few months after the funeral, I was overwhelmed when Lizzie asked if I'd like to have his fishing tackle. I couldn't think of a better way to honour his memory than by giving it a good home... but certainly wasn't prepared for what happened when I went to collect it.

Stepping through Archie's front door without his warm smile and firm handshake was a strange and difficult experience, but Robert Rankin was on hand and had kindly gathered together his father's rods, bags full of reels and fly boxes, books and other paraphernalia. There were many lovely items here; chiefly a nicely worn Hardy Perfect reel in full working order. I'd recently sold mine, and it seemed like fate that there was another waiting for me there.

Yet somehow it was the makeshift bits and pieces from Archie's time in general practice, which he'd salvaged and pressed into service, that were the most personal and special of the lot. I couldn't help but smile when I found the little cardboard box that, many years ago, had contained a 2ml bottle of Mixogen (an intramuscular

injection) – but which was now full of river trout flies!

Stepping Back In Time

As I was preparing to leave, Robert said: “I take it you know about the stuff in the old surgery?” The quizzical look on my face must have given him an answer. “I'm not sure what there is,” he continued, “but it's all pretty old and some of it must have belonged to my grandfather too. You're welcome to take a look and see if there's anything you'd like.”

I'll never forget the sense of anticipation that followed, as Robert unlocked a faded red door that I hadn't been through for over 20 years. This wasn't just about what fishing tackle I might find, but also the childhood memories that would surely come flooding back as we stepped into what had once been Archie's waiting room. And so it proved. Indeed, what with the old fireplace, wooden-framed reception area, consulting room signs and all, it truly was like stepping back in time.

Over towards the fireplace lay a number of old, discoloured and dusty rod bags, together with a metal Hardy gaff and folding, cane-handled landing net. The latter two were in remarkably good condition, although the net's archaic knotted mesh had long since begun

to stiffen and rot. Someone – presumably either Archie or his father – had carved nine and 10in markers into its handle at these distances above the metal end cap.

A simple enough measure, no doubt to indicate takeable lengths for trout, it nevertheless brought a uniquely personal touch to the net, and, for a moment at least, the feeling that the unseen spirits of the two Rankin doctors were there with us.

The rod bags, meanwhile, when carefully opened, revealed rosewood and split-



The Brady bag, Barbour Beaufort and vintage fly wallet is not your modern-day river attire.



TACTICS



cane fly rods for both trout and salmon fishing, with the former clearly having been used by Archie's father.

Having slumbered there for many years, some had inevitably deteriorated; however, the lack of heat in the room had prevented most from warping and cracking – as I later discovered via a fuller examination at home.

Grayling For Archie

It was Claire, my wife, who came up with the idea that followed. "Why don't you try to catch some fish with Archie's old gear, and then write it up? It'd make a lovely article."

Why not, I thought? It's always risky using cane rods that haven't been flexed for a long while, but there were a couple at least that seemed up to the task – in particular a three-piece, 9ft, 5-wt Mitre-Hardy. Dating from the 1960s, it was a relative youngster among largely much older companions, and remained in pristine condition.

Together with the Hardy Perfect and a double-taper silk line, I had the core of a suitable vintage river outfit that could be used safely without much risk of breakage. The old net also appeared more than capable of landing a few more fish – providing its mesh was replaced. Beyond this, Archie's nicely worn-in Brady bag and the pockets of my battle-scarred Barbour Beaufort would comfortably hold all I'd need.

The wild trout season

was over by the time I could really concentrate on bringing Archie's gear out of retirement. However, I seemed to remember that, for all his successes with trout and salmon, the good doctor could never recall having landed a grayling. This wasn't through lack of skill, but simply because the opportunity had never presented itself. Sadly, I could no longer look forward to the possibility of remedying this with Archie; however, I could at least try to catch some for him using the tackle I'd inherited.

Keeping It Traditional

It also seemed appropriate to use traditional tactics for this challenge; ones with which my friend would have been familiar. The morning of my session dawned overcast, breezy and chilly, so a simple indicator rig with a single Hare's Ear or Pheasant Tail Nymph seemed like a good opening gambit in the absence of rising fish. At the same time, the ability to change quickly to a dry-fly setup in the event of surface activity would certainly be useful.

Though still carefully preserved in their original packets, the knotless, tapered gut leaders I'd found in Archie's leather wallet would now be brittle and unusable. I therefore employed the nearest substitute to hand – a 7ft monofilament leader tapering to a 4lb point. A further five feet of level, 3lb tippet (a good compromise between presentation and security) increased this to 12 feet,

which would be manageable with the soft-actioned cane rod and, on the whole, suitable for the freestone river I'd be spending the day on.

An adjustable indicator of sheep's wool, at or below the taper-tippet junction, would facilitate presenting and detecting takes to a nymph down to a depth of five feet – just about the maximum that is realistically coverable with this method. Switching to dry-fly tactics, meanwhile, would involve nothing more than snipping off the nymph, sliding off the indicator (easily reattached if necessary) and adding an appropriate floating artificial to what would now be a long, level dry-fly tippet for drag-free drifts.

Older cane rods like Archie's tend to have a full-flex or all-through action, which isn't the best for casting a long line and forming narrow loops. Long casting isn't usually necessary on rivers, though, and after a bit of practice I soon found that by slowing down my stroke, the Mitre-Hardy could easily and gracefully put out the three

or four rod lengths of greased silk line that, at most, would be needed throughout the day. The line itself was also a joy to use. True, it needed a good deal more maintenance than modern PVC-coated versions; however, it retained hardly any memory, and landed very delicately on the water.


A Quest Fulfilled

After a succession of out-of-season wild brownies, it was the tail of a new run, where a recently demolished weir pool had once been, that yielded the first grayling of the day. The indicator and nymph had

almost run their course when the wool dived under and I felt the familiar twisting, turning reaction of a grayling as I set the hook.

A male fish of around 12 inches, he shone as bright as a new penny when I cradled him in my friend's net, before slipping the barbless hook from his mouth and sending him on his way. Plenty more followed as I explored further upstream, and after persevering with a much heavier and slower rod than I'm used to, plus a more complex line that would need cleaning and

drying afterwards to preserve its life, I came away from the river with not just an aching arm and a spot or two of grease on my jacket. There was also an increased sense of admiration for flyfishers of Archie Rankin's generation – and, more importantly, the feeling that I'd finally bid a proper farewell to him.

So wherever you are now, good doctor, I hope you think that your treasures are in good hands. Rest in peace, my friend – this one's for you. 



“I came away from the river with not just an aching arm and a spot or two of grease on my jacket... but also a sense of admiration for flyfishers of Archie Rankin's generation.”

In Memoriam: Dr Archibald MacPherson Rankin (1928-2013). Clark Colman has donated his fee for this article to the Stroke Association.



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One Last Cast

Jem Packer gives us his guide to ensuring you get the fly fishing present you always wanted this Christmas...

It's Christmas morning, we're surrounded by our loved ones, the turkey is in the oven, but then we spot them, under the tree, in their telltale fish-themed wrapping paper...

Our family has been busy buying us presents, presents that can't fail because they are all fishing related. And we love fishing, right? Of course we do! But that doesn't mean we will love a present just because it has a tenuous link to fishing. So here is my guide to some of the pitfalls of buying Christmas presents for the typical flyfisher. You might want to put it under the nose of anyone buying you a present this year!

Limit the number of wacky fishing/fish-themed presents. Just because something has pictures of fish or fishing equipment on it doesn't necessarily make it a great buy. The flyfisher in your life never wears a tie? What they need then is a novelty tie with pictures of fish on it. They never drink wine? What they will love is a wine stopper shaped like a fish. Oh, and if in doubt, what could be more fun than socks? Look these have trout and fly designs on them – they will want a dozen pairs!

I have cupboards full of these kinds of wacky presents – tins of mints with fishermen's creels on the lid, desk calendars with fishing cartoons, more fish-shaped bottle openers than I've had cold beers, not to mention endless fishing-themed oven gloves, aprons, cushions and mouse mats. So buyers, by all means get us the odd wacky item but please show some restraint!

Make sure fishing books are relevant. The same dangers apply when it comes to books. Why is that the people buying us presents so often leave it to the last minute to shop? They find themselves

in a book shop on Christmas Eve that's about to shut when, out of the corner of their eye, they spot a book has the word 'fish' somewhere in the title. Joy! Sure-fire winner! And it's bought on the spot.

Now I'm into all kinds of fishing but I can tell you right now that 'Baitcasting: A Beginner's Guide To Fishing In Papua New Guinea' may be glossy and it may have been reduced, but it's heading straight for the next jumble sale.

Also, just because we fly fish doesn't mean we'd like a book about keeping fish or cooking fish, let alone fish husbandry. Please, please stick to fly fishing and you won't be too far wrong!

Know What You're Buying!

That's the 'fun' stuff covered. Now we're going to get serious about tackle, because flyfishers take this very seriously indeed!

For those who don't know anything about fly fishing, buying equipment as a present unguided is a high-risk endeavour. There are superb fishing-tackle shops staffed by experts the length and breadth of the country, but go in without a very specific idea of what your loved one wants and you might as well buy us a novelty key ring with a fish on it.


Yet so many of our friends and family have done it. They've plucked up the courage to enter a tackle shop, where they find floor to ceiling fishing 'stuff' and think to themselves: "He's bound to like pretty much anything in here, right?" Wrong, because most of us are ridiculously, stupidly obsessed with the equipment

we use. So if someone expects to walk into a tackle shop and say "he likes fishing" and hopes to walk out with something we want, good luck!

I'm sure that most of you, like me, have some well-intended but never used Christmas presents lurking in the very bottom of your tackle boxes. My family know that I am predominantly a freshwater angler yet I have clippers that could cut through 500lb steel wire, a reel with a drag that could haul in a marlin and flies that look like they were designed to actively terrify trout!

So please ask us exactly what we would like before you shop, and write it down. Or, if you'd like an element of surprise, who doesn't love a voucher?

Now hopefully we can all go and have a really happy Christmas. But we do realise you can't help yourself so, if you absolutely have to, please limit yourself to a maximum of ONE wacky item with fish on it. Just don't expect us to ever actually put those socks on in public!

Ed: For a great range of fishy key rings, cufflinks, tankards and other novelty items, head over to www.stuffthatanglerswant.com! 





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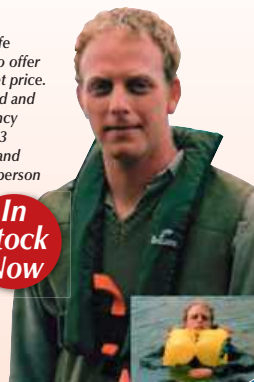


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